THE TRAIN BOY

Horatio Alger Jr.

Harold Tucker -
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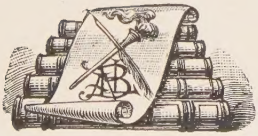
Paul Palmer.

THE TRAIN BOY.

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

Author of "The Errand Boy," "Frank Fowler, the Open Boy," "Tom Thatcher's Fortune," "Joe's Luck," "Tony, the Hero," etc.

ILLUSTRATED.



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THE TRAIN BOY.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAIN FOR CHICAGO.

The four o'clock afternoon train from Milwaukee, bound for Chicago, had just passed Truesdell, when the train boy passed through the cars with a pile of magazines under his arm.

He handed them to the right and left for passengers to examine, and after an interval passed back again, to receive pay for any that might be selected, and gather up the rest.

"Here's the latest magazines!" he cried, in a pleasant voice. "Harper's, Scribner's, Lippincott's!"

As he is to be our hero, I will pause a moment to sketch Paul Palmer.

He was a boy of sixteen, of medium height for a boy of that age, with dark brown hair, bright, spark-

ling eyes, not without a suggestion of mirthfulness, and round cheeks, with a healthful color. It would be hard to find a more attractive-looking boy than Paul.

The first passenger he came to on his return round was an old lady, bordering upon seventy, who was quite unaccustomed to traveling, and knew very little of railways and their customs.

When the magazine had been put in her hands she received it with glad complacency, supposing it to be a gift from the railroad corporation.

She hunted up her spectacles, and was looking at the pictures with considerable interest when Paul touched her on the arm.

"Want my ticket a'ready?" she asked, thinking it to be the conductor.

"No, ma'am," answered Paul, smiling. "Please give me the magazine."

"Why, you give it to me yourself," said the old lady in surprise.

"No, I only handed it to you to examine," said Paul.

"I thought, to be sure, you give it to me, and I was goin' to carry it to my darter Sarah Ann as a present. I'm goin' to spend a week with Sarah Ann."

Paul smiled.

He had met before unsophisticated travelers ready

to impart their family affairs to any one sufficiently interested to listen to them.

"You can do it now," he said, "if you will buy the magazine. Every body likes to read Harper's."

"How much do you ax for it?" asked the old lady, cautiously.

"Thirty-five cents."

"Lands sake!" exclaimed the old lady, in dismay. "Thirty-five cents for a picture-book!"

"There's some very nice reading in it, ma'am," said Paul, patiently.

"Maybe there is, but there ain't any covers."

"If there were I should ask a good deal more."

"I'll pay you ten cents," said the old lady, with the air of one who was making a very liberal offer.

"Couldn't take it, ma'am. I should fail if I did business that way," said Paul.

"Well, I guess you'd better take it, then. I can't afford to pay thirty-five cents for a picture-book."

Paul took the magazine, and passed on.

The next passenger was a young lady. She, too, had Harper's magazine in her hand.

"Won't you take fifteen cents for it?" she asked, with a smile, for she had heard the colloquy between Paul and the old lady.

"I am afraid not," said Paul, smiling back, for he understood her.

"Then I must pay your price."

She drew out a purse, through the meshes of which gleamed not only silver but gold, and put half a dollar into Paul's hand.

He was about to return her fifteen cents in change, when she said, pleasantly:

"Never mind. Keep the change for yourself."

"Thank you," answered Paul, politely. "I should be glad of many customers like yourself."

"Have you parents living?" asked the young lady.

"My mother is living, but my father died two years since."

"And I suppose you help your mother with your earnings?"

"Yes, miss, I give them all to her."

"I was sure you were a good boy," said the young lady, with a charming smile. "Tell me, now, do you earn good wages by selling papers and magazines on the train?"

"Yes, miss, more than I could get in a store or office. Last week I made eight dollars. Some lucky weeks I have made as much as eleven."

"Have you no brother or sister?"

"Yes, I have a little sister, ten years old."

"And a brother?"

"I have a half-brother—ten years older than myself," answered Paul, with evident hesitation.

"And does he help your mother also?" inquired the young lady.

Paul shook his head.

"We don't see much of him," he answered. "He isn't very steady, and is more likely to ask help of us than to give it."

"And he is a strong, young man!" exclaimed the young lady, indignantly. "Why, he can't have any sense of pride or honor."

"Not much. We can do better without him than with him."

"It is lucky for your mother and sister that you are different from him."

"That is true enough, miss. I should be ashamed to act like him."

"What is your little sister's name?"

"Grace."

"Why, that is my name. She is a namesake of mine."

"Then I hope she will be like her namesake," said Paul, gallantly.

"I see you are old enough to pay compliments," said the young lady, smiling. "Do you know what I feel like doing?"

"No."

"I am going to send a gift to my namesake. Here;" and, opening her purse once more, she

drew from it a two dollar and a half gold piece, and put it into Paul's hand.

"Do you really mean this for Grace?" asked the boy, almost incredulous.

"Certainly."

"Though you never saw her?"

"I have seen her brother," said the young lady, "and I have a very good opinion of him."

"Thank you very much. Grace will be delighted."

"Do you live in Chicago?"

"Yes, miss."

"Some time bring your little sister to call on me. I live with my aunt, Mrs. Sheldon, in Ashland avenue."

She handed Paul her card. Glancing at it, he ascertained that the name of his liberal friend was Grace Dearborn.

"Grace shall certainly come, if only to thank you for her present," said Paul.

After the boy passed on, Mrs. Sheldon, who sat in the seat just behind, said:

"Upon my word, Grace, you are extremely liberal to a perfect stranger."

"No doubt, aunt; but I took a fancy to the boy."

"How do you know he told you the truth?"

"I would stake my life upon his truth," said Grace, warmly.

"Did you ever see him before?"

"Never."

Mrs. Sheldon shrugged her shoulders.

"You must have great confidence in your knowledge of human nature, then," she said.

"I have, aunt," said the young lady, smiling.

"Well, my dear, you are rich, and are quite able to indulge your quixotic liberality."

"Thanks to Providence, aunt."

"And to your father."

The two would have taken seats beside each other had there been an opportunity, but when they entered the car the best they could do was to take outside seats, one directly behind the other.

Miss Dearborn's seat companion was a young man of about thirty, with a complexion preternaturally pale, the pallor being heightened by his intensely black hair and mustache.

He was well dressed, and on the middle finger of his right hand he wore a cameo ring, which was apparently of considerable value.

When Grace Dearborn was holding her colloquy with Paul, the young man glanced from behind the paper he was reading, and took notice of the well-filled purse which she displayed.

There was a covetous glitter in his eyes, which could

hardly have been expected from one whose appearance seemed to indicate that he was in easy circumstances.

He noticed also that Grace replaced the purse in a pocket on the side nearest to him.

"I must have that purse," said Luke Denton to himself.

I may as well say that Denton, originally of good family, had so given himself up to evil courses that he had been disowned by his relatives, and was reduced to making a living by preying upon the community.

In fact, he was an unscrupulous adventurer, and not above being a thief.

CHAPTER II.

A LEAP FROM THE TRAIN.

Luke Denton still held the paper before him, and appeared to be reading it; but it had ceased to have an interest for him. He cast furtive glances from behind it at the young lady by his side, and watched for an opportunity to transfer to his own pocket the coveted purse.

This was likely to be more easily effected because Grace Dearborn, though she had taken but slight notice of him, had made up her mind from a casual glance that he was what is technically called a gentleman. That her purse was in danger from a man so well dressed never occurred to her.

It so happened that Grace was an interested observer of nature, and so as the train sped over the road she looked, now out of the windows at one side, now out of them at the other.

To a novice, theft under such circumstances would have been difficult, but it was not the first time Luke Denton had practiced the art of a pickpocket.

He seized the opportunity when Grace was looking

across the car, stealthily to insert his hand into her pocket and draw therefrom the well-filled purse, the young lady meanwhile being quite unconscious that she was suffering a loss.

Her aunt, too, had her attention otherwise bestowed, for she was reading the magazine which her niece had just bought of the train boy.

It looked as if Luke would easily be able to escape with his booty before his theft could be discovered. Indeed he had made up his mind to leave the train at Libertyville, a small station close at hand, so as to be out of the way when Grace realized her loss; but, unfortunately for him, there had been an unsuspected witness of his adroit act.

Paul was just entering the car at the moment, and his first glance, not unnaturally, was directed toward the pretty young lady who had shown herself so generous to his little sister.

He was startled when he saw her pocket being picked, and was rather surprised that the gentlemanly looking person at her side should be the thief.

"What shall I do?" he asked himself.

His first impulse was to go forward, apprise Miss Dearborn of her loss, and denounce her seat companion. But this might enable Luke to drop the purse

and assume the airs of an innocent man. Perhaps Denton in his rage might even attack him.

Paul therefore framed a different plan.

He passed through the car into the next, where he met the conductor. To him he briefly communicated what he had seen.

"You have done right, Paul," said the conductor, who personally knew him. "Ten to one the gentleman will be for getting out at Libertyville, unless we are beforehand with him. There is no time to be lost, as we are only about a mile from the station. Come back with me."

The conductor entered the car where Grace was seated, with Paul close at his heels.

Luke Denton was looking out of the window, having folded his newspaper.

"In five minutes I shall be safe," thought he, as not far ahead he caught a distant view of the few houses which constituted Libertyville.

The purse he had slipped into the pocket of his pantaloons.

Meanwhile the conductor and Paul had approached, and stood beside the seat.

"Miss Dearborn," said Paul, as the young lady looked up with a smile of recognition, "will you feel for your purse?"

The young lady looked surprised, and Luke Den-

ton startled. He was not ready to commit himself, however, not yet being sure that his agency was suspected.

Grace felt in her pocket, and said, in surprise:

"It is gone!"

"Is it possible?" ejaculated Denton, affecting surprise. "Perhaps it dropped on the floor."

He was trying slyly to get at his pocket to see that the purse was found on the floor, when Paul said:

"It is in that man's pocket!"

All eyes were turned upon Denton, who, with a fierce oath, exclaimed:

"Boy, take care how you insult *me!*"

"I am only telling the truth," said Paul, steadily.

With a glance of alarm and distrust Grace ran precipitately from her seat, and Luke Denton was not slow in seizing the opportunity to escape.

He jumped up, nearly overturned the conductor, as he dashed down the aisle, flung open the door of the car, and with the recklessness born of desperation and the fear of arrest, with only an instant's hesitation, *jumped from the platform!*

The train was not going at full speed. As it approached Libertyville it was moving slowly, and probably the rate of speed did not exceed fifteen miles per hour.

"Good heavens, the man will be killed!" said Grace, alarmed.

The conductor sprang to the platform, and so did Paul.

They saw Denton roll over once or twice, and then pick himself up, apparently not seriously injured.

"The fellow is safe!" he said, turning to Miss Dearborn.

"Thank Heaven!"

"But he has carried off your purse."

"I don't care for that. That is, I don't care for it in comparison with the man's life."

"You are more good-natured than many would be who had suffered such a loss."

"There wasn't a large sum of money in the purse," said Grace.

"Do you remember how much?" asked Paul.

"I had fifty dollars when I left Milwaukee."

"And you gave me two dollars and a half for my little sister."

"And bought a *Harper's Magazine* of you," added Grace, smiling.

"Then there should be forty-seven dollars left," continued the train boy.

"I suppose so. I wish now I had given you the whole of it for your little sister."

"You were very generous as it was, Miss Dearborn."

"Still I think it would have done her more good than the gentleman who so unceremoniously borrowed it."

"Miss Dearborn," said Paul, with a sudden reflection, "now that you have lost all your money, let me hand you back this gold piece."

And he offered her the quarter-eagle which she had given him for his little sister.

"Oh, no, there is no need that I should recall my gift," she said, shaking her head. "To be sure I am temporarily penniless, but my aunt will see that I don't want. Aunt Caroline, is my credit good with you?"

"To be sure, Grace," said the matronly lady whom she addressed.

"And you can certify that the loss of my purse won't embarrass me seriously?"

"I think not," said Mrs. Sheldon, "considering that you have an income of——"

Here she stopped discreetly, just as she was about to reveal an important secret.

"Say six hundred dollars a year," chimed in Grace, laughing. "You see, Paul," she continued, addressing our hero, "you need have no compunctions about

keeping my gift to your sister. It won't entail any distressing economy."

They had reached Libertyville, and Paul went out on the platform with his papers.

Of course nothing was to be seen or heard of Denton, who had jumped off the train fully three-quarters of a mile back.

To the station master the conductor hurriedly communicated what had passed, and enjoined him to detain Denton if he should appear at the station, and try to purchase a ticket for the seven o'clock train, which would start a little over an hour later.

Again the train moved on.

"There is no loss without some little gain, Aunt Caroline," said Grace. "As my seat companion has taken French leave, there will be room for you to sit beside me the rest of the journey."

"Rather dearly purchased, Grace," said the elder lady, "since it costs you forty-seven dollars."

"Oh, I consider your company worth that sum," said the young lady, playfully.

"Really, Grace, you have taken your loss very coolly."

"Would it do any good to make a lament over it, aunt?"

"No, perhaps not, but you seem in just as good spirits as if you had lost nothing."

"So I am, but I should not be if I were a poor seamstress, or a milliner's apprentice, for instance. Then it would be a serious thing for me."

"Well, Grace, all I can say is that it would annoy me very much if I had met with such a loss. I dare say I shouldn't sleep to-night."

"That would be foolish, aunt, to lose sleep as well as money."

At seven o'clock the train ran into the depot, and Miss Dearborn and her aunt rose from their seats.

"Can I call a carriage, Miss Dearborn?" asked Paul, politely.

"If you please, Paul."

"My dear, you are too familiar with that boy," said Mrs. Sheldon, while Paul was gone in search of a hack.

"He seems very well bred, aunt, and he is certainly polite and obliging."

"Come and see me, and bring your little sister," said Grace, smiling, as Paul handed her into the hack and closed the door after her.

Paul touched his hat, and then, leaving the depot, bent his steps toward his humble home, where supper and a warm welcome awaited him.

CHAPTER III.

PAUL PALMER AT HOME.

In a small two-story house, not far from the junction of a side street with Lake street, lived Mrs. Palmer, Paul's mother.

It was rather shabby-looking externally, being sadly in want of paint, but Mrs. Palmer's rooms on the second floor were neatly, though plainly furnished, and scrupulously clean.

There was an outside staircase, so that the second floor was independent of the first.

Paul ran up stairs, and opened the door, entering at once into the sitting-room, where his mother and sister were seated.

Mrs. Palmer's face brightened at the sight of Paul. He was always full of life and gayety, and his coming never failed to cheer her.

"So you are back again, Paul," she said, smiling a welcome.

"Yes, mother, and I am hungry, I can tell you. Is supper most ready?"

"It will be in five minutes," said his mother, fold-

ing up her work and going into the adjoining room. "I have got some dipped toast for you to-night."

"Just what I like."

"But I delayed putting the toast into the dip till you came. There is some minced meat."

"In other words, hash," said Paul, laughing.

"I think you will find it good, in spite of the name."

"Oh, I am sure to like it, since it is home-made. At the restaurants I am a little afraid; I don't know but it may be made of dogs or cats."

"Do they make it of dogs or cats, Paul?" asked his little sister, curiously.

"I don't know," said Paul; "I won't swear to it. All I know is that there's a lot of dogs and cats that disappear mysteriously every year in Chicago."

Meanwhile Mrs. Palmer had been busily completing her arrangements for supper, and it was ready within the five minutes mentioned.

"Supper's ready, Paul. I haven't made you wait long," she said.

"No, mother; you're always on time, like an express train."

"What sort of a day have you had, Paul? Did you sell much?"

"Yes, more than usual. How much do you think I made?"

"A dollar and a quarter?"

"More than that. A dollar and seventy-five cents."

"That is very good indeed. It would take me a week to make as much as that by sewing."

"They pay mean wages for sewing, mother. I wouldn't slave at that kind of work."

"I shouldn't like to depend upon that kind of work altogether, but I can just as well earn something that way. I don't want you to support Grace and me in idleness."

"No danger of your being idle, mother. That doesn't come natural to you. Some time or other I hope to support you as a lady."

"I hope you will be prospered, Paul; but I shall never be willing to fold my hands and do nothing."

"Then again I don't want always to live in this poor place," pursued Paul.

"It is comfortable. I feel fortunate in having so good a home."

"It would be easier to find a better one if we could afford to pay more rent. Of course this will do for the present. What have you been doing to-day, Grace?"

"I went to school this morning, and I have been studying arithmetic and geography at home since school was over."

"You will become a famous scholar in time, Grace."

"I never expect to know as much as mother," said Grace.

"I hope you will know a good deal more," said Mrs. Palmer.

"You know ever so much, mother."

"You think so now, because I know more than you; but the time will come when you will understand better how little your mother knows."

"Didn't you use to keep school, mother?"

"Yes, but school-teachers don't know everything. Well, Paul, what have you seen to-day? To go to Milwaukee and back would be a great event to Grace and myself in our quiet course of life."

"I've got used to it, mother. It's all in the day's work. Oh, I mustn't forget to tell you a lady had her pocket picked on our train to-day."

"Tell me about it, Paul," said Grace, with eager interest.

So Paul told the story, very much as it has already been told in the last chapter.

"Did the pickpocket really jump off the train when it was going?" asked Grace, her eyes wide open.

"Yes, Grace."

"Did he get hurt?"

"No; the conductor and I watched from the platform, and saw him turn two or three somersets, but he got up quickly and made off."

"It was taking a dangerous risk," said Mrs. Palmer.

"Yes; it is more of a risk than I would take for forty-seven dollars."

"Was that the sum taken?"

"Yes."

"Poor young lady! What a loss it will be to her!"

"She happens to be a rich young lady, mother. She didn't mind it any more than I would if I should lose ten cents, and perhaps not as much."

"Do you think the man will be caught, Paul?"

"I don't know. I suppose he will keep in hiding for awhile. Anyhow, he got off with the money. I suppose he doesn't feel very friendly to me, as I was the one who detected him in the theft."

"Does he know that?"

"Oh, yes."

Mrs. Palmer looked rather alarmed.

"Be on your guard against him, Paul. He may do you a mischief sometime."

"I don't doubt he would like to; but I don't believe he will ride on that railroad again very soon, and I would not recommend him to go about much in Chicago."

"How do you know the lady was rich, Paul?" asked Grace.

"I know more than that. I know what her name is," said Paul.

"What is it?"

"Grace Dearborn."

"Why, her first name is the same as mine."

"So it is. Don't you think she might send a present to her namesake?"

"She doesn't know anything about me," said the little girl.

"Don't be too sure of that."

"How should she?"

"Because I told her. I can tell you something more. She sent you a present."

"Really and truly?" asked Grace, in a flutter of excitement.

"Yes, really and truly. Now what do you hope it is?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. I should like a nice doll. I've got a rag baby, but that isn't as good."

"She didn't send you a doll."

"No; I didn't expect she would; she wouldn't have any with her."

"No; young ladies do not generally carry dolls round with them. Still, you can buy a doll with what she did give you."

Paul drew from his vest-pocket the small gold piece, and handed it to his little sister.

"How much is it, Paul?" asked Grace, who wasn't in the habit of seeing gold coin.

"Two dollars and a half, Gracie."

"Why, that's ever so much money. I can get a nice doll on State street for half a dollar."

"So you can, and keep the rest of the money for something useful."

"Miss Dearborn was very kind," said Mrs. Palmer. "I suppose she made the present before she lost her purse."

"Yes. She invited me to bring Grace to call upon her some day. She lives on Ashland avenue."

"I should like to go, Paul."

"So you shall, Gracie."

Meanwhile all the family had done justice to the supper, which, though certainly very plain, was palatable.

As they rose from the supper-table, Paul took his hat from a peg, and said :

"I'll take a little walk, mother."

"In what direction, Paul?"

"I shall go to Randolph street, and perhaps stroll down as far as State street. It is rather lively that way."

"Very well, Paul. I suppose you won't be out late?"

"Oh, no. I always tell you beforehand when I stay out."

Paul had hardly been gone twenty minutes when an unsteady step was heard on the staircase outside, and there was a loud knock on the outer door.

"I'm afraid it's Stephen," said Mrs. Palmer, nervously. "I wish Paul were at home!"

"You don't seem very glad to see me," said Stephen, scowling.

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

Mrs. Palmer herself went to the door and opened it. There entered a thickset young man, of very dark complexion, with an unhealthy color on his bloated cheeks. His dress was disarranged, his hat sat on his head with a rakish slant downward, revealing coarse, unkempt black hair.

"Good-evening, mother," said the new-comer, staggering forward and sinking into the rocking-chair usually occupied by the widow herself.

"Good-evening, Stephen," said Mrs. Palmer, gravely.

"Evenin', sister Grace," said the intruder, looking about for a glimpse of the little girl, who was staring at him uneasily.

The little girl responded reluctantly.

"Where's Paul?" he asked next.

"He's gone out for a short walk."

"No matter. I don't like Paul; he puts on airs. He doesn't treat me with the respect due to a—hic—older brother."

"Paul's a good boy," said Grace, rather indignantly; for, though timid, she was always ready to rush to the defense of her favorite brother.

"Hey! what's that? No impudence, little chicken. Don't you know I'm your brother, and more than twice as old as you?"

Grace was about to reply, but her mother gave her a warning glance.

"You don't seem very glad to see me," said Stephen, scowling.

"I should be more glad to see you if your habits were good, Stephen," said Mrs. Palmer, gravely.

"Who says—hic—that my habits ain't good? Show me the man; that's all I want. Show him to me, I say. If it's Paul, I'll let him know who I am," said Stephen, belligerently.

"I don't need any one to tell me, Stephen. Your appearance is sufficient to show that you have been drinking."

"All gentlemen drink, mother. It's good for the health. I ain't one of your sneaking 'Sons of Temperance.' I know how to behave, I want you to understand. I'm a gentleman, I am."

"Gentlemen don't stagger when they walk, and talk thick as you do, Stephen."

"You needn't lecture me any more, Mrs. Palmer—don't you hear?" said Stephen, becoming irritated.

"When I come in of an evenin' to make a neighborly call, you might treat me different. Have you had supper?"

"Yes."

"I haven't. I haven't eaten a blessed thing since mornin'."

"If you would like, I will get you something, Stephen."

"That's the way to talk, old lady. I 'cept—hic—your kind invitation."

"My mother isn't an old lady," said Grace, who was as ready to stand up for her mother as for her brother.

"My mother isn't an old lady!" repeated Stephen, with drunken gravity. "What is she, then? She isn't an old gentleman. Of course not."

"Hush, Grace!" said Mrs. Palmer. "It's of no consequence whether I am called an old lady or not. Would you like some tea, Stephen?" she inquired.

"You haven't got any whisky in the house, have you, mother?"

"No; we don't keep it. Tea will be much better for you."

In a few minutes a cup of tea, some cold meat, and bread and butter were placed before Stephen, who ate and drank with eager relish.. It was true, as he had

said, that he had not broken his fast since morning, though he had drank since then more than was good for him.

His meal seemed somewhat to sober him.

"I say, mother," he began, pushing back his chair from the table, "you're livin' in luxury, while I'm a poor, miserable fellow without a home."

"I am sorry to hear it, Stephen. It is your own fault. You are surely able to earn a comfortable living for yourself."

"My health ain't good, and I can't get work half the time."

It seemed very ridiculous to one who observed his strong frame to think of him as being in poor health.

"Your health would be better if you would abstain from drink, Stephen," said Mrs. Palmer.

"Oh, hush up! I've had enough of that talk. I'm a gen'leman, and I'll do as I please. Mother, will you do me a favor?"

"What is it, Stephen?"

"Lend me five dollars. I'll pay it back 'morrow or next day—honor of a gen'leman."

Mrs. Palmer surveyed her visitor with some indignation, and answered, sharply:

"Are you not ashamed, Stephen Palmer, to ask such a thing of me?"

"Why should I be 'shamed?"

"You, a strong young man, with only yourself to support, ask me, a weak woman, dependent upon a boy for support, to lend you money?"

"I'll pay it back 'morrow or next day."

"You know very well you would do no such thing. You would spend it in a drunken carouse with your disorderly companions. No, Stephen Palmer, I have no money for you, or such as you."

"Is that the way you treat a son of yourn?"

"You are no son of mine. You are my step-son, but your bad conduct troubled your father for years before his death. You have no claim upon me or mine."

Stephen eyed her with dull anger. Even in his drunken condition he felt the severity of her words.

"I say, Mrs. Palmer, what did you do with my father's money—the money that ought to have come to me? You cheated me out of it, and you are livin' in luxury, while I have no home."

"You know very well," said Mrs. Palmer, disdainfully, "that your poor father left no property, except the little furniture you see in these poor rooms. He might have been in good circumstances had you not involved him in losses, and reduced him to poverty by your bad courses."

"You've got all the money between you—you, and Paul, and Grace," persisted Stephen, angrily.

"You know it's a wicked falsehood, Stephen!" said Grace, firing up like a kitten at her step-brother's insulting words. "You're a bad man!"

"Hoity-toity! I'm a bad man, am I, little vixen?" said Stephen, glowering at her.

"Yes, you are!"

"Hush, Grace! Little girls should not talk too much!" said her mother, fearing that Stephen might become dangerously incensed and proceed to violence.

Though he was affected by drink, she felt that she could not offer any adequate resistance in such a case.

"If Paul would only come home!" she said to herself. He was only a boy; still with him in the house she would feel comparatively safe.

"Come, old lady," said Stephen, "I see you want to get rid of me. Give me some money, and I will begone."

"I have no money for you, Stephen."

"Didn't Paul bring home some money to-night?"

Paul often handed his mother the money he had earned during the day, and would probably do so before he went to bed, but fortunately, as she considered, he had not yet done so.

"He brought home money, but he has it in his own pocket," she answered.

"Are you sure he didn't give it to you?" asked Stephen, suspiciously.

"No, he did not."

"Then he ought to. He's a selfish boy, to—hic—keep it all himself."

"He doesn't keep it himself. He will probably hand it to me before he goes to bed."

"Then I'll come round to-morrow mornin', and you can give me some."

"It will be of no use, Stephen. Paul's money goes to support the family, and you have no claim upon it."

"Haven't you any money in the house, Mrs. Palmer?"

"I decline to answer the question, Stephen Palmer. All I can say is, that I have no money for you."

"Come, old lady, you're puttin' on airs. I won't have it. Do you hear me? I say I won't have it!" and the wretched fellow pounded on the table fiercely with his fist.

Just then, most unluckily, Grace started, and let the gold piece, which she had been holding firmly in her hand, fall on the floor.

Her brother espied it, and his eyes gleamed with drunken joy.

"Ho, ho!" he said. "Gold pieces rollin' 'round! You're mighty poor, ain't you? That's just what I need."

He got up from the chair, and approaching Grace, who by this time had picked up the gold, seized her roughly by the arm, and exclaimed:

"Give me that gold piece, young one, or I'll wring your neck!"

"Grace shrank and cowered under his brutal grasp, but still clutched the money, though pale with terror.

"It's mine!" she said. "You sha'n't have it."

"We'll see!" said the ruffian, tightening his grasp and shaking her roughly.

CHAPTER V.

PAUL TO THE RESCUE.

Of course a contest between a burly ruffian of twenty-five and a little girl of ten could only terminate in one way. Stephen Palmer forcibly opened the closed hand of his little step-sister, and snatched from it the coveted coin, which he exultingly held aloft, crying:

"I told you I would have it, you little minx."

Grace began to cry, and Mrs. Palmer exclaimed, in justifiable indignation:

"Are you not ashamed, Stephen Palmer, to rob a little girl like Grace?"

"Who talks of robbery?" retorted Stephen. "I've only borrowed it from her."

He laughed tauntingly, for he understood, while he spoke, what little chance Grace would have of recovering her money through his voluntary restitution.

"Borrowed it!" repeated Mrs. Palmer, with bitter emphasis. "It is theft, and nothing else."

"Do you call me a thief?" blustered Stephen, scowling.

"You are nothing better, Stephen Palmer!" returned his step-mother, now thoroughly aroused.

"Take care what you say, Mrs. Palmer!" said Stephen, advancing a step toward her. "I'm a bad man when I get mad."

"You never said a truer word," said Mrs. Palmer, more courageous in defense of Grace than she would have been for herself.

"Look here! You just drop that," said Stephen, doggedly, "or I may do you harm."

"That would not be surprising," retorted the widow, undaunted. "A man who will rob a little girl won't hesitate to strike a woman."

The intoxicated young man was thoroughly incensed by his step-mother's sarcasm, and forgot the little manliness he ever possessed.

"If you think so, I'll make your words come true," he said, savagely, and advanced toward Mrs. Palmer with uplifted arm.

Mrs. Palmer turned pale, and Grace uttered a shriek of terror.

"Don't strike my mother, you bad man!" she called out.

This diverted the current of Stephen's wrath, and he turned upon the little girl.

"I'll whip you if you prefer it, Miss Saucebox," he said, and grasped Grace by the shoulder.

Mrs. Palmer sprang forward to rescue her child, but the struggle was by no means equal. The ruffian would probably have injured both but for an opportune arrival.

Paul was at the foot of the outside staircase when he heard his little sister's scream. He had a tender love for the little girl, and the thought that she was in some peril gave wings to his feet. He fairly flew up stairs, and burst into the room like a tornado.

One glance enabled him to understand the situation. He seized Stephen, and forcibly wrenched him from Grace.

"What does all this mean?" he demanded, turning to his mother.

"It means that Stephen has stolen your sister's gold piece, and when I remonstrated was on the point of assaulting us both."

"You contemptible coward!" exclaimed Paul, turning upon his step-brother with flashing eyes, his manner full of disdainful contempt.

Even Stephen cowered a little before the boy's scorn.

"I borrowed the money, that's all," he said. "It's a great thing to make such a fuss about. And what's more," he continued, resuming his swaggering tone, "I won't stand any impudence from a young whelp like you. Do you hear?"

"Grace," said Paul, not noticing the young man's words, "has he got your gold piece now?"

"Yes," answered Grace, half crying.

"Give me back that money!" said Paul, sternly.

"Not much!" sneered Stephen. "I'll keep it if it's only to spite you. Do you hear that?"

"Give me back that money!" persisted Paul, resolutely.

"No, thank you," answered Stephen, mockingly. "This time next year you may call for it, and if it's convenient I may give it up."

Paul opened wide the outer door, and looked out into the street. As he looked, a policeman was just passing.

"Shall I hand you over to the police?" he asked, significantly, pointing at the guardian of the city's peace.

For the first time Stephen looked uneasy.

"Don't try to frighten me with such nonsense," he said. "You wouldn't dare to call him in."

"You'll see whether I will," said Paul, coolly.

Stephen looked his young step-brother full in the face, and saw that Paul was in earnest. His bullying had failed of its effect, and he had a decided aversion to an encounter with the police.

"Take your money!" he said, flinging the gold

piece on the floor. "I only wanted to scare you a little."

"Grace, you can pick up your money," said Paul.

"As for you, you young rascal," continued Stephen, scowling fiercely at Paul, "I won't forget your impertinence of to-night. I'll get even with you some day, see if I don't."

"Your threats won't prevent my defending my mother and sister against your brutal violence," said Paul, calmly.

Stephen staggered out of the room, nearly tumbling down the staircase in his drunken unsteadiness.

All felt relieved when he had gone.

"I should have lost my nice present but for you, Paul," said Grace.

"I came home just in time," said Paul. "I hope Stephen will keep away now. I never want to see him."

"I never knew him to act so disgracefully before," said Mrs. Palmer. "He has fallen into bad habits, and keeps disreputable company, I fear."

"There isn't much doubt about that, mother," said Paul. "I have more than once seen him walking with thieves and gamblers. Now I know where I have seen that pickpocket before," he exclaimed, with sudden energy.

"What do you mean, Paul?"

"I told you about the man who jumped from the train to-day after picking Miss Dearborn's pocket. Well, there was something in his face that looked familiar, but I couldn't think where I had met him, though I was sure I had seen him before. Now I remember meeting him walking in Randolph street with Stephen one day last week."

"You don't think Stephen is a pickpocket?" asked Mrs. Palmer.

"No; it takes training to make a pickpocket. Stephen isn't light-fingered enough to succeed in any such business; but a man that keeps company with pickpockets isn't likely to be much better than they."

"I am afraid, Paul," said Mrs. Palmer, anxiously, "that Stephen with some of his bad companions may lie in wait for you and do you some injury."

"I will try to take care of myself, mother," said Paul.

"Why should there be so many wicked people in the world?" sighed the widow. "I can't see how Stephen turned out so badly. His father was a good man, and I have heard that he had a good mother; but Mr. Palmer always had a great deal of trouble with him from a boy."

"He is lazy, and wants to get a living without work," answered Paul. "Then again, he drinks."

"That alone is enough. Oh, Paul, I hope you will never fall into intemperate habits."

"You need not fear for me, mother," said Paul, firmly. "I despise drunkenness as much as anybody can."

"Yes, you are very different from Stephen, Heaven be thanked! How could I get along without you, Paul?"

"I hope you won't have to get along without me, mother. But I have been thinking that Stephen may possibly come round here again to annoy you and steal Grace's money. Grace, you had better let me put the money into a savings-bank for you."

"That is well thought of, Paul. Then it will be safe, even if we do have a second visit from Stephen. What do you say, Grace?"

"Here it is, Paul," said the little girl. "You take care of it for me."

"I will put it into a bank Saturday evening, when some of the savings-banks are open. I don't think Stephen will be able to get it away from me."

"If Stephen has any sense of shame he will not come here again very soon," said the widow.

Paul went to bed early, for he must take the 7:30 train for Milwaukee in the morning. He slept soundly, for his day's work had fatigued him.

CHAPTER VI.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

Stephen Palmer left the residence of his stepmother in a state of furious indignation against the whole family, but his anger was hotter against Paul than either of the other two members. It is rather mortifying for a young man to find himself worsted by a boy ten years his junior, and Stephen was obliged to confess that he himself had come off second best. The worst of it was, that he had lost the gold coin which he so much coveted. He was really hard up, his whole available funds amounting to only ten cents. The gold piece would have been to him a real bonanza. He had counted upon taking a cheap seat at Hooley's Theater, and thus passing a pleasant evening, but of course that must be given up, and there was nothing to do but to go back to his dingy little room, since anywhere else he would need to spend money.

"Confound the boy!" ejaculated Stephen. "I'd like to wring his neck. How dare he talk up to me as he did? But for him," he continued, dolefully, "I

would have got off with the gold. I'll get even with him sometime, see if I don't."

Stephen thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and moodily made his way to his lodging-house. It was a shabby brick house of three stories, not far from the lake. He had been up late the night before, and thought he would lie down for awhile to rest. Later in the evening, perhaps, he would go out, and might have the good fortune to fall in with some one of his companions who was better fixed than himself financially.

He opened the door with a latch-key, and was making his way up stairs when a little girl of twelve called out from the back stairs in a shrill voice:

"Mr. Palmer, my mother wants to see you."

"Well, she can see me if she comes where I am," said Stephen, not very good-naturedly.

He paused on the stairs, and a woman in a faded calico dress soon made her appearance, coming up from below.

"What's wanted, Mrs. Jones?" asked Stephen, uncomfortably, for he could guess what his landlady wished to see him about.

"I'd be thankful, Mr. Palmer, if you'd pay me your rent. You're owin' for two weeks and a half, and I need the money very much."

"I can't pay you to-night," said Stephen.

"That's what you're always a-sayin'. Didn't you promise me the money last Tuesday, when the two weeks was up?"

"I've been disappointed of some money that I expected," muttered Palmer. "If I had it I'd give it to you."

"That don't pay for my groceries and fuel," said Mrs. Jones, evidently much dissatisfied with his answer.

"Who said it did?"

"If you'll pay me some money on account," said the landlady, beginning to understand the character of her lodger, "I'll wait a little longer."

"I tell you I haven't got any money by me, except this," and Stephen drew out the dime which constituted his sole wealth. "I suppose you don't want that."

"I'll take it on account."

"No, you don't. I ain't going to strip myself of every penny to oblige a cormorant of a lodging-house keeper."

"Is that all you've got to say to me, Mr. Palmer?" asked Mrs. Jones, indignantly.

"What more do you want? Don't I promise to pay you when I have the money?"

"Do you do any work?" demanded the landlady. "Do you earn anything?"

"Yes."

"At what business?"

"That's my affair. However, I don't mind telling you that I—speculate."

"Speculate—on ten cents!" retorted the landlady, in a sarcastic tone.

"All my capital's locked up in stocks at present," said Stephen, with ready falsehood. "I may have five hundred dollars coming in next week."

"I don't know whether to believe you or not," said Mrs. Jones, with justifiable skepticism.

"Do you doubt the word of a gentleman?" blustered Stephen.

"If you call yourself a gentleman, act accordin'. I've got just one thing to say, Mr. Palmer—if you don't pay me three weeks' lodgin' by next Tuesday, out you go, or my name isn't Jones. I can't afford to let my rooms to them as don't pay me."

"It'll be all right next Tuesday," said Stephen, glad of the reprieve. "There's two or three parties that owe me more than the amount of your bill, but they don't pay up."

This was an utter fabrication, as there was no one in the city or elsewhere whom Stephen could rightfully claim as a debtor, but then a regard for truth was not one of his strong points.

Stephen went up stairs to his room, and lay down

on the bed. He soon fell asleep, and was still sleeping, when he was aroused by a loud pounding at his door.

"Who's there?" he cried out, only half awake.

"Come and see," was the reply, in an impatient voice.

Stephen tumbled out of bed and opened the door.

"Luke Denton!" he said. "Why, what on earth's the matter with you?"

Luke Denton it was, but by no means in as good trim as when we first made his acquaintance in the railroad car. There were patches of mud on his coat and pantaloons; there was a long scratch on one of his hands, and a bruise on his forehead, while his nose appeared to have been bleeding. For a man who was generally very careful of his appearance it was certainly rather a strange plight to be in.

"Have you been in a fight?" Stephen asked, not unnaturally.

"No, but I'd like to be in just one," growled Denton.

"Who do you want to fight with?"

"Look here, Stephen! isn't that boy—the train boy, I mean, on the Milwaukee road—a brother of yours?"

"Yes."

"I can't help it—I'd like to mash him, and I will if I get the chance."

"You have my permission," said Stephen, "and I'd like to stand by and see you do it."

"Then there isn't much love lost between you two?"

"You'd better believe there isn't. But what has he been doing to you? You don't mean to say he is the cause of all that?" and he pointed to Luke's disordered dress.

"Yes, he is."

"How did it happen?"

"He made me jump out of the train when it was going fifteen or twenty miles an hour."

"But how did he make you do it?" asked Stephen, puzzled. "I can't understand."

"You see, I was sitting near a nice young lady, who had a purse pretty well filled. I noticed it when she took out a gold coin and gave it to the boy for his sister."

"Oh, that's the way Grace came by her gold, then!"

"What! do you know about it?"

"The girl showed it to me this evening," said Stephen. "But go on."

"It occurred to me that I stood more in need

of the money than she, and I managed to slip my hand into her pocket and draw it out."

"I wish I could do it," said Stephen, "but I can't. My fingers are too clumsy. I should be sure to be caught."

"I would have got off well enough—in fact, I had made up my mind to get off at Libertyville, when that sneak of a boy came up and exposed me."

"Did he see you take the purse?"

"It seemed so. I didn't know any one was looking when I took the money."

"What did you do?"

"The young lady jumped up in a fright. I saw my opportunity. I had the inside seat, so I sprang for the door, and, without much thought of the risk I ran, made a flying leap from the train."

"You might have been killed. I wouldn't dare to risk it."

"Perhaps I wouldn't if I had had time to think; but I didn't. Well, I landed and rolled over two or three times, enough to get these bruises and stain my clothes. I suppose I was lucky to escape without breaking my neck or limbs, but I feel too sore to be very thankful."

"There's a later train, starting from Libertyville. I walked to Deerfield, and a hard time I had of it. If the train hadn't been nearly an hour late, I

wouldn't have caught. As it it was I did, and here I am."

"I suppose you didn't save the money?"

"Yes, but I did," chuckled Luke. "Look at this."

He drew out the purse, and displayed it to his companion, whose eyes glistened as he saw the gold.

"How much is there?"

"Nearly fifty dollars."

"I'd be willing to be bruised a little for that sum."

"I would have got it without a bruise but for that brother of yours—dash him!"

"I owe him a grudge myself. I'm with you."

"You must hide me for a day or two till this blows over. The police may be on my track."

"That depends on whether my landlady will let me stay. She's been driving me for back rent."

"How much do you owe her?"

"Two weeks and a half at two dollars a week."

"Here, take that and pay her."

Stephen took the five-dollar gold coin which his companion flung on the bed, but no part of it found its way into the hands of Mrs. Jones.

CHAPTER VII.

A REJECTED SUITOR.

In one of the handsomest houses on Ashland avenue lived Grace Dearborn, the young lady whose acquaintance Paul had made on the train. Perhaps it would be more proper to say that her aunt, Mrs. Sheldon, lived here, and Grace was a member of her family. Mr. Sheldon was dead, and his widow carried on her husband's business—a large retail drygoods store—through the help of the former chief clerk, now promoted to general manager, under whose wise and faithful superintendence the store flourished, and yielded to the widow an ample yearly income.

But if the aunt was wealthy so was the niece. Miss Dearborn had come into possession of an independent fortune of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, which was so invested as to net her seven per cent., or a little more than ten thousand dollars a year.

As this fact was generally known, it will not be thought strange that Miss Dearborn was much sought after in society, and her hand was considered a great prize in the matrimonial lottery. Thus far, however,

she had resisted all solicitations, and society waited in vain to hear of her engagement.

Let us go back a week, and introduce Miss Dearborn at home on a Wednesday evening.

She had been chatting with her aunt on indifferent matters, when a servant appeared with a card in the presence of the two ladies.

"A gentleman to see you, Miss Grace," she said.

"Who is it, my dear?" asked Mrs. Sheldon, as Grace took the card from the servant's hand.

"Major Ashton," answered Grace, reading from the card.

"Will you see him?"

"I suppose I have no good excuse for declining," said the young lady, shrugging her shoulders.

"He may wish to see you on important business," said Mrs. Sheldon, playfully.

"I hope not," said the young lady, looking alarmed. "If I thought so, I wouldn't go down."

"Oh, don't let my words influence you, my dear. It may be an ordinary call. Besides, if it were not, the major is considered a desirable *parti.*"

"Not by me," returned Grace, with emphasis.

"What have you to object to him? He is good-looking."

"Ye-es, I suppose so," admitted Grace, with evident reluctance.

"Let me assure you, my dear Grace, that he is considered decidedly *distingue.*"

"I would sooner admit that than that he is *good-looking*. He doesn't look *good* to me."

"What is the matter with him?"

"There is a look in his eyes that I don't like. It is a cruel look, as if he had a latent fierceness and hardness in his disposition."

"All fancy, Grace."

"Perhaps so; but I don't fancy his looks."

"Then he is rich."

"I suppose he is, though I don't know."

"He must be. He lives like a gentleman of large means."

"I don't attach much importance to wealth, aunt. Surely, in a husband, other things are more important."

"You wouldn't marry a penniless lover?"

"Why not, if I respected and loved him?"

"My dear Grace, you alarm me. I never supposed you entertained such quixotic notions. Some day we may have you eloping with a dry-goods clerk, or a poverty-stricken artist, or——"

"Don't borrow trouble, Aunt Caroline," said the young lady, with a merry laugh. "You don't get rid of me so easily. It is possible, of course, that I may fulfill your prediction, for I have money enough to en-

able my future husband to live respectably; but I'll give you fair warning and sufficient notice. But I must go down, or the major will be getting impatient."

Descending to the drawing-room, Grace saluted courteously a gentleman who rose from a sofa, and advanced to meet her with considerable *empressement* of manner.

"You are very kind to consent to see me, Miss Dearborn," he said.

"Oh, no," answered Grace, smiling. "I should have been unkind to decline, since I have no good reason for doing so."

"At any rate, suffer me to interpret it as kind, since it pleases me to do so. You do not know how much I attach to it in the present instance."

A slight shade of dissatisfaction flitted over the face of Miss Dearborn, for the words and manner of her visitor clearly pointed to a declaration of love, which she wished to avoid, if possible.

She was not like some young ladies in society, desirous of extending the list of her conquests.

"Thank you, Major Ashton," she answered, lightly, "but compliments are more in place in the ballroom."

"I do not mean it as a compliment, Miss Dear-

born. Compliments are often insincere. I beg you to believe that I am sincere."

"Don't let us make too much of a trifle, Major Ashton. I am ready to believe you are sincere. Have you been to the opera?"

There was a brief season of Italian opera in Chicago, and this led to the question.

"Yes," answered the major. "Might I hope that you will accept an invitation to accompany me tomorrow evening?" he asked, eagerly.

"I am afraid I must decline. I am expecting company, or, rather, my aunt is."

"Then, perhaps, another evening?" suggested the major.

"I fear I cannot accept during the present engagement. You are very kind to invite me."

"I wish I might have the privilege of always attending you, Miss Dearborn."

Grace blushed, but not with pleasure.

"What opera did you attend?" she inquired, coldly.

"'Norma.' I can't say it is my favorite, but the parts were well sung."

"I have never heard it. In fact, I have to confess that I do not enjoy the opera as much as many. Probably my musical taste is not sufficiently developed."

She spoke rapidly, and somewhat nervously, hoping

to prevent the major from carrying out what she perceived to be his intention. But she had to do with a man who was resolute of purpose.

"Miss Dearborn—Grace—" he said, abruptly, "I hope you are not quite unprepared for what I came here this evening to say. It consists of but three words—*I love you!*"

"Of course, I am very much flattered," said Grace, hurriedly, "but I am sorry to hear it."

"Why should you be sorry?"

"Because it is quite impossible for me to reciprocate your feelings."

"Don't say that, Miss Dearborn," returned Major Ashton, in a tone of mingled disappointment and mortification. "Can you not learn to love me?"

"Love does not come by learning, or by any conscious effort, Major Ashton. It should be spontaneous, and come from the heart."

"I do not wish to be vain, or to speak egotistically, Miss Dearborn, but I am generally considered an eligible match. My social position you know, and I am able to support a wife in luxury——"

"I do not care to question it," interrupted Grace. "I hope you will transfer your flattering proposal to some one who may prove to you a good wife, and——"

"I cannot transfer my devotion as easily as you imagine," said Ashton in a tone of annoyance. "I have

long loved you, and thought of you as the one woman with whom I desired to walk through life. Your refusal, if persisted in, will wreck my happiness."

Grace was tempted to survey somewhat closely the man who thus declared that he should be miserable without her. He did not look like a despairing lover. His sleek black hair and whiskers, the rather insipid regularity of his features, his evident foppish attention to his dress, hardly indicated a soul moved to its lowest depths by romantic and despairing passion.

Self-conceit, vanity, a high degree of self-complacency could be read in the major's face, but he did not look like a man who would jump into Lake Michigan, a victim to the tender passion.

Grace did not feel that there was any cause to make herself miserable on her suitor's account.

"I hope, Major Ashton," she replied, courteously, "that time may soften whatever disappointment you feel. Pardon my saying that you have never appeared to me the one man with whom I should wish to walk through life, and this being the case, I should wrong both myself and you by accepting you."

"You will consider my proposal? You may change your mind?"

"Do not hope it, Major Ashton," said Grace, firmly. "It can never be. And now you will allow me to bid you good-evening."

She left the room swiftly, and Major Ashton had no choice but to terminate his call.

"Confound the girl!" he muttered, when he reached the street. "She was my trump card, and she has failed me! What shall I do next?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STRUGGLING ARTIST.

"Here's all the illustrated papers!"

Of course the speaker was Paul, and again we go back, this time four weeks.

It was the same afternoon train from Milwaukee, and there were but twenty miles to travel before reaching Chicago.

The conductor chanced to be making his rounds at the same time. He was calling for the tickets in order to punch them. Among the rest he came to a young man, slender and graceful, and with one of those faces that seem to win upon a stranger at first sight—a thoroughly good face, with an expression of refinement and intellectual power. He appeared, however, to be in limited circumstances, for his coat was well worn, and in places there was a suspicious shiningness indicating a respectable antiquity.

"Ticket!" said the conductor, addressing himself to the young man.

The young man felt in his coat-pocket for his ticket, but it was gone—at least, he could not find it.

An expression of alarm overspread his face.

"I can't find my ticket," he murmured, in perplexity.

The conductor listened coldly, and, it must be added, with incredulity. He had met such cases before.

"Then you can pay me the value of the ticket," he said.

The young man's face flushed. Small as the sum was, he did not have it.

"Will you be kind enough to give me time, and I may find the ticket?" he said.

"I will wait till we reach the next station," said the official, coldly. "Then you must either show me the ticket or pay your fare."

"If I can do neither?"

"Of course I must ask you to leave the train," and the conductor passed on.

Paul stood where he could hear this colloquy, and he noticed the distress of the young man. His sympathies were aroused, for he suspected that the passenger had not enough money to replace the missing ticket.

He, too, knew what it was to be poor, and he pitied him.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, approaching the young

man, after the conductor had passed on, "but have you lost your ticket?"

"Yes, I fear that I have.

"Where did you get on?"

"At Deerfield."

"That is not so bad as if it were a through ticket from Milwaukee."

"No, but I am unable to replace it. I—I am not provided with the necessary money."

"The ticket is less than a dollar."

"Yes, but even that small sum I have not at hand."

"I hope you won't be offended if I offer to lend you the money," said Paul.

"Offended! I thank you heartily, for it is very necessary that I reach Chicago this evening. My mother is sick, and would be anxious."

Paul drew from his pocket a dollar bill, and placed it in the young man's hand.

"You are very kind to a stranger. Give me your address, that I may send it to you."

Paul did so, adding:

"Don't put yourself to any trouble. There is no hurry. Wait till it is convenient."

"Thank you again," said the young man, recovering his cheerfulness. "I hope some time to return the favor. I am an artist, and I will paint your por-

trait for half price, whenever you get ready to give me a sitting."

"Thank you," answered Paul, laughing. "I must wait for that till I am a little richer."

Frederic Vernon, for this was his name, had settled in Chicago six months previously, with his invalid mother, hoping to make a fair living as an artist, for he was a clever portrait painter, but he met the usual fortune of young men of merit who establish themselves in a large city without influential friends. Orders came in slowly, and he was obliged to accept paltry prices, far below the value of his work. Yet he would not have complained if he could have obtained enough work, and been promptly paid for such as he did.

On the day subsequent to his adventure in the cars, chance, or let us say Providence, brought him a liberal patroness.

Grace Dearborn, returning from a shopping excursion, had taken a seat in one of the city horse-cars when her attention was attracted by the conversation of two young ladies who were sitting near her.

"That's a fine portrait of yours, Sarah," said one.

"Isn't it?" said the other, complacently. "Pa says it is as well painted as if we had employed a tip-top artist."

"Didn't you?"

"No; it was painted by a young man, as poor as

poverty, who is obliged to work for any sum people are willing to pay. Fancy, I only paid twenty dollars."

"Only twenty dollars?"

"Yes; he wanted more, of course, and it took him three or four weeks to paint it, but that was all I would pay. Pa gave me fifty dollars to pay for a portrait, so I made thirty dollars out of it," said the selfish girl, complacently.

"I should think he would starve—the artist, I mean."

"He did look dreadfully seedy, but that was nothing to me, you know."

"I'm a great mind to get him to paint my portrait."

"You'd better. Let him know that you are a friend of mine, and the price I paid, and he will paint yours for the same."

"I will. What is his address?"

"No. — State street."

The other took down the address, and so did Grace. Gifted with a warm, sympathetic nature, she could hardly repress the disgust she felt at the miserable selfishness of the two handsomely dressed girls, who counted it a smart thing to obtain the services of an accomplished artist at a price which would have poorly compensated a hod carrier.

"I may as well have my portrait painted," she said to herself. "It will give me an excuse for helping this young man, who has been so cruelly underpaid by one who could evidently afford to pay him fairly."

The next morning Frederic Vernon was sitting in his plain studio in a fit of despondency. He had just had a visit from Miss Framley, who had given him an order for a portrait, after beating him down to twenty dollars.

In vain he had told her that he could not afford to work so cheap. She protested that she would not pay a cent more than her friend.

Vernon was on the point of declining the commission, but he reflected with a sigh that work even at that price was better than to be idle, and he sadly consented.

Miss Framley, well pleased with the success of her negotiation, swept out of the studio, in her seal-skin sacque and costly silk, feeling that she would be applauded by her father—a wholesale pork merchant—for her financial success.

On the stairs, as she was descending, she met Miss Dearborn, whom she recognized by sight, and would have been glad to know.

"Is Miss Dearborn going to patronize the artist?" she thought. "If he gets many patrons like her, he

will be getting fashionable, and put up his prices. I am glad I have made my bargain."

Miss Dearborn entered the studio, and a hasty glance satisfied her that the artist was indeed poor. She glanced at the artist, and felt an immediate interest in him. Though shabbily dressed, she read refinement and nobility of character in his expressive face, and was extremely glad she had come.

"Mr. Vernon, I believe," she said, gently.

The artist bowed.

"I am told you paint portraits."

Another bow.

"I will give you a commission, if you have the time to execute it."

"I have something too much of that," said Vernon, smiling faintly. "I will gladly accept your commission."

"If you have other work requiring your present attention, I am not in haste."

"I have just agreed to paint the portrait of a Miss Framley——"

"Whom I met on the stairs?"

"Probably; she just went out."

"Then I will wait till you have executed her commission. Meanwhile allow me to pay you one-half in advance."

Frederic Vernon stared in amazement, as she put in his hands two fifty-dollar bills.

"A hundred dollars!" he ejaculated.

"Yes."

"Do you know that I have agreed to paint Miss Framley's portrait for twenty dollars?"

"I am sorry to hear it. I propose to pay a good price for good work. There is my card. Be kind enough to apprise me when you are ready for me."

"Miss Dearborn," said the artist, his face lighting up with gratitude, "you have done a great favor to a struggling man. Miss Framley beat me down, while you offer to pay a price such as only an artist of established reputation would dare to charge."

"I'm only anticipating matters a little," said Grace, smiling, as she left the studio.

"God bless her!" ejaculated the artist, fervently. "I was almost discouraged, but now hope lights my pathway. I will move mother out of that dingy room into a lighter and more cheerful apartment."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST SITTING.

Two days later the young artist sent word to Grace that he was ready to give her a first sitting.

She was not long in finding her way to the studio.

"You have not delayed Miss Framley on my account?" she said.

"No, but Miss Framley has gone to Milwaukee for a week, leaving me at leisure."

When Grace, following directions, had seated herself in the required attitude, Vernon engaged her in conversation about books and authors, and each discovered that the other had a mind rarely cultivated.

Miss Dearborn's face lighted up, and became animated. She forgot that she was sitting for her portrait, and for that very reason, perhaps, afforded a better study for the young artist. He could not help, from time to time, directing glances of scarcely disguised admiration at the fair sitter. But of this she was unconscious.

When the sitting closed, she was surprised to learn that she had been in the studio two hours.

"I hope you have not found it very tedious," said Vernon, apologetically.

"On the contrary," answered Grace, smiling. "The time has passed quickly."

"I am glad of that. Then you won't mind giving another sitting soon?"

"To-morrow, if you like."

"I should like it exceedingly, if it will not interfere with your engagements."

"Oh, my engagements are those of an idle young lady, and can easily be put off. May I see what progress you have made?"

"I would rather you would not look just yet. I have only made a beginning."

"I will be patient, then. Indeed, I can't say I am over anxious. My own face is quite familiar enough to me."

"If I can make it look natural, I shall be quite contented."

"I have confidence in your talent. Besides, I have heard one of your portraits highly praised."

"Indeed! May I ask where?"

"I cannot tell you. It is a friend of Miss Framley."

"Miss Cutler?"

"Very likely. I don't know either of the young ladies, but I overheard them in a street-car commend-

ing highly the portrait you had painted of Miss Cutler. They seemed equally pleased," she added with a smile, "with the low price which you asked for your work."

"Which she compelled me to accept, rather," said Vernon, with a curl of the lip. "I should starve if all my patrons were as bent upon a good bargain."

"Mr. Vernon," said Grace, earnestly, "I don't think you will have to paint another portrait at such a ridiculously low price."

"Not if all were as generously disposed as you," returned Vernon, gratefully.

"There may be others disposed to pay you a fair price. Indeed, I have persuaded my aunt to sit to you when my portrait is finished."

"How can I thank you for your kindness, Miss Dearborn?"

"No thanks are required where an equivalent service is rendered."

Frederic Vernon was elated by this second order, for he judged that the compensation would be equally liberal.

This was the case, for it was Grace who paid for her aunt's portrait. Mrs. Sheldon at first objected to sitting till her niece assured her that she wished the portrait for her own room, and wished the privilege of paying for it.

"But, my dear, it will be so tedious sitting in the young man's studio for an hour or two at a time."

"Oh, my dear aunt, I won't force you to do it alone. I will accompany you."

"If you will, Grace, I shall not mind it so much. I am afraid you will find it stupid."

"Oh, no; I think not. I can carry a magazine or novel, you know."

"To be sure."

Grace did carry some reading matter, but made little progress in it.

She and Vernon always found something to talk about, and sometimes her aunt joined in, when the subject was not above her comprehension.

She, too, approved the artist.

"Really, my dear," she said, "the young man seems very intelligent, and, indeed, *distingue*, if his clothes were better."

"Artists cannot dress handsomely at their work, Aunt Caroline."

"No, I suppose not. Still, I fancy Mr. Vernon is poor. He has a very plain studio."

"He hopes to get into a better one soon, he tells me."

"He looks as if he had seen better days," said Mrs. Sheldon, reflectively. "I've a great mind to ask him."

"Oh, pray don't, Aunt Caroline!" said Grace, in alarm.

"Why not?"

"He may be sensitive on the subject. It may arouse painful thoughts."

"Possibly; then I won't speak of it."

"I wouldn't, if I were you."

When Grace's portrait was sent home, she took pains to show it to her friends in the hope that she might procure additional work for the young artist. She was successful, and before Mrs. Sheldon's was completed, Mr. Vernon had received three orders from friends of the heiress, one a gentleman, who felt safe in patronizing one whom Miss Dearborn spoke well of.

With considerable diffidence, on the recommendation of Grace, Vernon ventured to charge the same sum—two hundred dollars—and was surprised to find that his new patrons more readily agreed to pay this sum than the very modest price he had formerly asked. They took it for granted that a man who demanded such prices must be an artist of high rank, and agreed to his terms without a word.

The fact that he had felt justified in taking a more commodious and spacious studio, and had purchased a new suit, helped him, for most people judge by appearances.

Before he left the old studio, however, he had a call from a friend of Miss Framley and Miss Cutler, who ignorant of the favorable turn in his affairs, expected to obtain his work on equally favorable terms.

Frederic Vernon was alone when the young lady—Miss Henrietta Simmons—came sailing in, rustling in silk, and modeled after the latest fashion plate.

"Mr. Vernon, I suppose?" she said, condescendingly.

"The same, miss."

"Two of my friends, Miss Cutler and Miss Framley, have sat to you for their portraits."

The artist bowed.

"Really, you succeeded very well in both," said the young lady, patronizingly.

"Thank you for saying so."

"I have about made up my mind to employ you."

"I shall be glad to accept your commission."

"I suppose the terms will be the same," said the young lady, carelessly.

"I am afraid not."

"Miss Framley told me you wouldn't charge me any more than she paid."

"Miss Framley is in error."

"I might be willing to pay you twenty-five dollars," said the young lady, disappointed, "though I felt sure you would charge me no more than my friends."

"I am charging two hundred dollars now for portraits," said the young artist, gravely.

"Two hundred dollars!" ejaculated the visitor. "Surely, no one would pay you that."

"I have three orders on hand, each of which will pay me that sum."

"I can't understand it," said Miss Simmons, bewildered.

"I believe the quality of my work is getting known and appreciated," said Vernon, smiling at the young lady's amazement. "Your friends were fortunate enough to employ me when I was wholly unknown."

Some months after—to anticipate a little—when Vernon had become a fashionable portrait painter, Miss Simmons actually sat to him, and paid his price.

It is the way of the world. We are willing to pay any sum at the bidding of Fashion, with litttle regard to what we pay for.

But while Vernon's worldly success had improved, there was another consequence of his acquaintance with Grace which disquieted him. In spite of all the arguments which reason could offer, he felt that he was drifting—had already drifted—into love for the beautiful girl to whose kindness of heart he owed his new prosperity.

CHAPTER X.

MISS FRAMLEY'S ECONOMY.

Three days passed, and nothing more had been seen of Stephen Palmer in his step-mother's humble home.

"I hope he'll keep away," said Paul. "His coming can do no good, and gives no pleasure to any of us."

"I agree with you, Paul, though it seems hard to say that of one of the family."

"He has never behaved like one of the family." said Paul.

"He was a wayward boy, and even at an early age gave considerable trouble to his father and myself."

"He hasn't improved as he has grown older, mother."

"I am glad you are not like him, Paul."

"Then I am not altogether a nuisance," said Paul, laughingly.

"You are my main support—the staff on which I lean, my dear son. You have always been a good boy."

"The staff will be stronger some day, mother," said Paul, cheerfully. "I am not always going to have you spoil your eyes by sewing."

"I feel better to be doing something. That reminds me—I have just finished some work for Miss Framley. Do you think you can carry it after supper?"

This conversation took place at the tea-table.

"Certainly, mother; you know I always go out for a walk, and I can just as well go to Mr. Framley's as anywhere else. How much am I to collect on it?"

"A dollar and a half, I think, won't be too much. It has taken me four days."

"You ought to charge more, mother. Think of a dollar and a half for four days' work! Why, it won't half pay you," said Paul, indignantly.

"I don't dare charge more, Paul, or the Framleys will give me no more work. I was recommended to her by her friend, Miss Cutler, as one who would work cheap, and in the only interview I had with her she impressed this upon me as a matter of great importance."

"Is she poor? Does she need to grind you down to such low prices?"

"No; she lives in an elegant house on Wabash avenue, and she is always dressed in the most costly

style. No doubt she has plenty of money at command."

"Then she can't be a lady," said Paul, decidedly.

"She certainly thinks herself so," said Mrs. Palmer. "Her father is a man once poor, and still uneducated, who made a good deal of money during the war, and is now ambitious to live in style."

"Shoddy!" said Paul, contemptuously. "That explains it."

"Nevertheless I am glad to obtain work from them, Paul."

"Provided they will pay a reasonable price. You had better let me charge two dollars, mother."

"No, it will not do. I shall be satisfied with a dollar and a half."

"Very well, mother. Of course it is for you to decide."

Paul finished his supper, and, taking the bundle, made his way—partly by walking, partly by riding—to Wabash avenue.

The houses on this avenue were handsome, and looked like the abodes of luxury.

"I wish mother could live here," said Paul to himself. "It makes me discontented with our poor home, after seeing so much elegance."

At last he reached the house of Mr. Framley,

whose daughter has already made her appearance in our story as the economical patron of art.

Paul ascended the steps and rang the bell.

The summons was answered by a man-servant, who surveyed Paul with an air of lofty superiority.

"Well, young feller," he said, "what have you got there?"

"A bundle of work for Miss Framley, old feller!" answered Paul.

"Was you addressin' me?" demanded the flunkey, angrily.

"I was."

"I am not an old feller."

"Young feller, then, if you like it better."

"You are an impertinent boy."

"I have no business with you," said Paul, coolly. "Take that bundle to your mistress, if you please, and say to her that the bill is one dollar and a half."

"You can call for the money some other time," and the servant was about to close the door, when Paul said, sharply:

"That won't do. I can't come here twice. Tell Miss Framley what I said."

The servant retired, grumbling, and soon returned with a dollar bill, which he offered to Paul.

"Miss Framley says the work isn't extra well done, and a dollar's enough. You can take it and go."

Paul's eyes flashed with justifiable indignation.

"I should like to see Miss Framley," he said. "This won't do."

"She won't see you. Better take the money and go."

"I will take the money—on account, but not in full payment. I wish to see Miss Framley."

That young lady was listening at the head of the stairs, being desirous of hearing whether the messenger made any fuss about her mean reduction of a reasonable price, and thought it best to descend the stairs and argue the matter.

"Are you the son of Mrs. Palmer?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Framley."

"Then tell your mother she asks too much for her work. A dollar is quite enough for the little she did."

"Do you know how long she was occupied with your work?" said Paul.

"No; I suppose she did it in a day or two," answered the young lady, in a tone of indifference.

"It occupied four days, and you wish to pay her at the rate of twenty-five cents per day."

"Really, it is nothing to me if your mother is a slow worker. I oughtn't to suffer for that."

"Wasn't the work well done?"

"Tolerably well."

"My mother is noted for her excellent work, Miss Framley. She is entitled to one dollar and a half for this piece of work, and that isn't enough. If she had taken my advice, she would have charged you two dollars."

"Really, you are a very presuming boy," said Miss Framley. "My friend, Miss Cutler, told me your mother would work cheap, and so I employed her. If she is contented with a dollar, I will send her some more work."

"She will not be contented with a dollar," said Paul, firmly. "I insist upon the price named."

Miss Framley drew out her purse, and, taking a half-dollar from it, with a spiteful air handed it to our hero.

"There," she said, "take it, but don't expect me to employ your mother again."

"I don't," said Paul. "Good-evening."

"It is absolute extortion," said the economical young lady, as she went up stairs again. "It is very provoking, for Mrs. Palmer sews exquisitely. If I hold off for awhile, I may bring her to my terms. Twenty-five cents a day is a very fair price for such easy work as sewing, *in my opinion*."

"Well," thought Paul, as he bent his steps homeward, "there are certainly some mean people in the

world. Evidently Miss Framley is rich, but I wouldn't be as mean as she for all her money."

He wasn't far from home when, in passing one of the brilliantly lighted stores on Clark street, his attention was drawn to a young lady just descending from a carriage. As the light fell upon her face, he recognized his traveling acquaintance of a few days before.

"Miss Dearborn!" he cried, hastening forward with a pleasant smile of recognition.

Grace turned.

"Why, it is my friend of the train!" she said, cordially. "Aunt Caroline"—for Mrs. Sheldon was just behind her—"this is Paul Palmer, who tried to save my purse from the pickpocket."

"It is a pity he had not succeeded, Grace. I presume the unprincipled man has spent most of it by this time."

"Very likely," said Grace, with a laugh. "Well, Paul, have you met with any more adventures, or rescued any more young ladies from the schemes of dangerous men?"

"I have not had a chance, Miss Dearborn."

"But I don't doubt you would be ready. How is my namesake?"

"She is very well. She was delighted with your present."

"I am glad of that. Can you spare five minutes, or are you in a hurry?"

"Oh, no, I have plenty of time."

"Then come into this store with me."

Paul followed Grace, wondering a little why she made the request. When he came out he carried in his hand a very pretty child's cloak which Miss Dearborn had purchased.

"Give it to your little sister, with my love," she said.

"How generous you are, Miss Dearborn! Grace won't be able to sleep to-night for joy."

"Be sure you remember your promise to bring her around to see me."

"Thank you. Will the evening do? I am on the train during the day."

"Come next Thursday evening — I will expect you."

"There is some difference between Miss Dearborn and Miss Framley," thought Paul.

CHAPTER XI.

PAUL GETS INTO TROUBLE.

With a glad heart, notwithstanding the loss of Miss Framley's patronage, Paul bent his steps toward his humble home.

Grace was still up, not being willing to go to bed till her brother came home.

"What is there in that bundle, Paul?" she asked.

"You have not brought the work back, Paul?" asked his mother, apprehensively, for it would have been a serious thing to spend more time on it, when her time was so poorly paid for.

"No," answered Paul; "I left the work."

"Was Miss Framley at home? Did you collect the money?"

"Yes; but I had some difficulty about it. Do you think, she was mean enough to try to turn me off with a dollar."

"A dollar for four days' work! How can the rich be so inconsiderate?" sighed Mrs. Palmer.

"Inconsiderate!" exclaimed Paul, indignantly. "That isn't the word—it's downright meanness."

"Wouldn't she pay you the dollar and a half?"

"Yes; I insisted on it. I gave her a piece of my mind."

"I hope you didn't make her angry, Paul. She won't give me any more work."

"No, she won't; but you mustn't mind that. I'll find some one that will pay you better. Here is the money, mother."

The widow took the three half-dollars which were handed her, with a sigh. In spite of Paul's confident assurance, she felt disappointed at having lost Miss Framley's custom. She was not so hopeful as she had been at Paul's age, having met with her share of the world's rebuffs.

"You haven't told me what you've got in that bundle, Paul," said Grace, returning to the charge.

"I'll show you, Miss Curiosity," said Paul, and proceeded to open it.

"Oh, how lovely!" exclaimed Grace, spell-bound with rapturous admiration as the beautiful little cloak was held up before her.

"It's for me," said Paul, gravely. "How does it fit?" and he threw it over his shoulders and walked about, the little cloak barely descending to his waist.

"It doesn't fit you at all, Paul. Isn't it for me?"

"For you? Who would buy such a nice cloak for you, do you think?"

"I am afraid you have been very extravagant, Paul," said his mother. "The cloak is very pretty, but we cannot afford such things."

"It didn't cost me a cent, mother."

"Then who gave it to you? Not Miss Framley?"

"I should say not," answered Paul, contemptuously. "Catch her giving five cents' worth to anybody! No; it was Miss Grace Dearborn, the same young lady that sent Grace the gold piece."

"Where did you see her? Did you call at the house?"

So Paul had to tell the story, which does not require repeating, and Grace tried on the cloak, which proved to be an excellent fit, though it hardly harmonized with the child's plain print dress.

"Some time I'll buy you a new dress, Grace," said her brother, "a dress that you can wear with the cloak. I wish you had it by next Thursday evening."

"Why then, Paul?" asked his mother.

"Because I have promised to take Grace with me to see Miss Dearborn on that evening."

The pleasure excited by the gift was such that Mrs. Palmer was unusually jubilant, notwithstanding the loss of one of her customers. She did not seem wholly forsaken, and fortune appeared again to have smiled upon her.

Meanwhile, though Paul did not know it, trouble

was preparing for him. He had two enemies—one his own brother, Stephen, already introduced; the other Luke Denton, whose designs he had frustrated in the car. Luke had not forgiven him for the leap which he was obliged to make from the moving train, and the bruises which he received in consequence.

"I'll be even with the young sneak—see if I don't," said Luke, vengefully, to Stephen, as they sat together in the room of the latter, smoking.

"Don't blame you a bit," said Stephen.

"I can't help it if he is your brother," continued Luke. "He's injured me, and I'll make him suffer for it."

"You needn't think I'm going to stand up for him," said Stephen; "I hate him myself. Didn't he prevent me from——"

"Robbing your little sister," said Luke, finishing out the sentence.

"I didn't mean to rob her," said Stephen, half-angrily. "I needed the money, and was only goin' to borrow it for a day or two."

Luke Denton laughed. He did not admire Stephen, though he kept his company, and felt a malicious pleasure in saying disagreeable things.

"Of course; that's understood," he said. "You'd have gone round and returned the loan, with interest· that's the way you always do."

"I don't like your way of talkin', Luke," said Stephen, frowning. "You may not mean anything; but I don't like it."

"Well, never mind that. The main thing is—we both hate that impertinent stripling, and you won't feel very bad if he gets into a scrape, even if you are his brother."

"No; I shall be glad of it."

"Then I reckon you'll have a chance to be glad very soon."

"How is that? Is there anything in the wind?"

Luke nodded, and in a few sentences detailed a plan which he had devised during the time his physical injuries had obliged him to remain in the retirement of his friend's room.

Stephen laughed approvingly.

"Good!" he said. "Couldn't be better! Good enough for the pious little fraud! After that, he won't lecture me so much—me, his elder brother! I wonder I haven't wrung his neck before now."

"He might resist, you know," said Luke, dryly.

"Do you think I ain't a match for the little cur?" blustered Stephen.

"I think he might give you more trouble than you think for. He's strong and muscular for a boy of his age, and he isn't a coward. I'll give him credit for so much."

This led to more boasts on the part of Stephen, to which his companion listened, with an amused smile. He despised Stephen, who was far inferior to himself in education and manners; for Luke was fitted for a better career than he had been led to adopt.

The next afternoon Paul was returning to Chicago by the usual train. He had met with fair success in selling his papers and books; indeed with rather more than the average, having sold three bound novels, which sale afforded him a handsome profit.

In passing through the cars, his attention had been turned more than once to an old man, with a long gray beard and hair of the same color, who was dressed in rather an old-fashioned suit. Experience had taught him that men of that appearance are seldom likely to buy anything more than a daily paper, and he had not left any circulars with the old Quaker, for such his broad-brimmed hat showed him to be.

"Come here, boy!" called the old gentleman, as he was passing the second time. "What has thee to sell?"

"All the illustrated papers and magazines," answered Paul. "I have besides some novels, if you want to look at them."

"Nay, my young friend; life is too brief to read such light books. Has thee the *Atlantic Monthly?*"

"Yes, sir; here it is."

The old man took it, and began gravely to turn over the pages.

"What does thee ask for it?" he inquired.

"Thirty-five cents."

"My wife Ruth likes to read it. I think I will purchase it," said the old man.

So saying, he put his hand into his pocket to feel for his wallet.

Quickly an expression of alarm came over his face, and he exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by all the passengers near by:

"I have been robbed! I cannot find my wallet!"

"It may have dropped out of your pocket," suggested Paul.

"Nay, I see it. It is in thy pocket, thou young thief!" exclaimed the old man, reaching out his hand and drawing forth a large wallet from the side pocket of Paul's sack coat. "It is truly sad to see such depravity in one so young."

"Do you mean to say I took your wallet?" asked Paul, thunderstruck.

"It cannot be otherwise. Did I not find it in thy pocket? Is there an officer present? This boy should be arrested."

"I am a detective," said a man near by, showing his badge.

"Then it is thy duty to arrest the boy. He is a thief!"

Poor Paul! Brave as he was, his heart sank as he saw the passengers regarding him with suspicion.

"I am innocent," he said. "I never stole in my life."

"So young and so hardened!" said the old man, sorrowfully; and Paul saw that his denial was not credited.

"I did not steal the wallet," Paul said firmly.

CHAPTER XII.

PAUL'S CRITICAL POSITION.

Paul felt that he was in a tight place. He could not understand how the wallet could have got into his pocket. Yet there it was, and appearances were decidedly against him in spite of his innocence.

"I did not steal the wallet," he said, firmly.

"Then how came it in thy pocket?" asked the old man.

"I don't know. Some one must have put it there."

"Verily that is a poor excuse," said the aged Quaker.

"It's too thin!" said a young man near by, who thought himself a wit. "It won't wash!"

Paul looked at him in disdain. Still it troubled him, because he feared the other passengers would agree with the speaker.

Just then the conductor entered the car. He was a firm friend of Paul, whom he had known ever since he first came on board the train.

"What is the matter?" asked the conductor, looking with surprise at the group around Paul.

"A pocket-book has been stolen, I believe," said a quiet passenger.

The conductor walked up to the scene of excitement.

Paul looked up at him with a feeling of relief.

"Mr. Bates," he said, "do you think I would steal?"

"Certainly not, Paul. Who charges you with it?"

"This gentleman here," answered our hero, pointing to the Quaker.

"I fear thee is guilty, for I discovered my wallet in thy pocket," said the Quaker, mildly.

"Is this true, Paul?" asked the conductor, puzzled.

"Yes."

"Can you explain it?"

"No. This gentleman asked me for a magazine, and, on looking for his money, could not find his pocket-book."

"I looked in thy pocket, and straightway found it," supplemented the Quaker.

"What made you look there?" asked the conductor.

"I thought the boy might have yielded to a sudden temptation. It grieves me to think he was so weak."

The detective here spoke.

"Conductor," said he, "do you know this boy well?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has any charge ever been made against him before?"

"No, sir."

"Has he ever been suspected of dishonesty to your knowledge?"

"Certainly not. He is the most popular train boy we ever had. I would stake a year's salary on his honesty."

"Thank you, Mr. Bates," said Paul, gratefully.

He felt gratified, in this trying emergency, to find that there was one man who had full confidence in him.

"He looks honest," said the detective, thoughtfully.

"Verily, appearances are deceitful," said the Quaker. "I cannot afford to lose my money because the boy looks honest. Was not the wallet found in his pocket? I call upon thee, officer, to arrest him."

Paul felt very uncomfortable. Though he was buoyed up by the consciousness of his innocence, he was troubled by the thought that he might be carried back to Chicago handcuffed, or at any rate under arrest. Suppose he should meet some one

whom he knew, would it not always be remembered against him, even if he were acquitted?

"You wish to press the charge, then?" said the detective.

"Verily, it is my duty."

"I hope, sir," said Paul, "you will not injure me to that extent. I swear to you that I am innocent."

"Probably thee art equally regardless of honesty and the truth."

"Will you be prepared to appear in court upon the charge to-morrow morning?" asked the detective.

"Yes, verily," answered the Quaker, with a little hesitation.

"Do you live in Chicago?"

"Nay, I live in Philadelphia."

"Of course, all the broadbrims come from Philadelphia," said the witty young man. "Yea, verily, they do."

"Friend, do not deride me," said the old Quaker, looking rebukingly at the speaker.

"What is your name, sir?" asked the officer.

"My name is Ephraim Perry," answered the old man.

"Where are you staying in Chicago?"

"At the Commercial Hotel."

"Shall you be there to-morrow morning?"

"Yea, verily."

"It strikes me," thought the detective, who was himself a native of Philadelphia, "he rather overdoes the 'yea, verily.' I have lived in Philadelphia, and I never heard any of the 'Friends' use the expression so freely."

"How do you identify the wallet?" he asked, aloud. "How do you know it is yours?"

"By the appearance."

"Appearances are deceitful, as you said a little while ago. Can you tell me what are the contents?"

So saying, the detective, to whom the wallet had been passed, made a motion to open the wallet.

"I trust thee will not open the wallet," said the Quaker, hastily.

"Why not?"

"It contains private papers."

"Such as what? It is necessary that I should satisfy myself that the wallet is really yours."

"Will thee not take my word?" asked the Quaker, uneasily.

"Will you swear that the pocket-book is yours?"

"Yes. Nay, I never swear," said the Quaker, hastily interrupting himself. "I will affirm."

"I am ready to swear that I didn't take the wallet," said Paul.

"That is different," said the Quaker. "Will not

that be satisfactory?" asked the Quaker, turning to the detective.

"No."

"Does thee doubt my word?" asked the old man, reproachfully, and seeming very uneasy.

"Not necessarily, but I think you may be mistaken," answered the detective, composedly.

"Yes, open the wallet," said the conductor, who, as Paul's friend, was led to hope that the result of the search might, somehow or other, turn out for Paul's advantage.

"Thee shall not do it!" exclaimed the old Quaker, in excitement. "It is my property, and no one shall open it."

He thrust out his hand and tried to clutch it, but the detective held it above his head.

"I cannot understand your reluctance," he said. "Is there anything in it that you are anxious to conceal?"

"Nay," answered the Quaker, faintly; "but it is my property."

"Will you tell me what is in it?"

The old man was silent.

"Then I will open it."

"Ha!" exclaimed the detective, drawing out two pieces of pasteboard. "Here are two pool tickets;

and here," drawing out another paper, "is a lottery ticket. Do Quakers deal in such articles?"

"Some evil-disposed person must have put them there," said the old man, nervously. "The boy——"

"The boy had no chance. Come, sir, I believe you are masquerading. Let me see. Here is a card—Luke Denton. Ha! I begin to see what it all means."

With a quick and unsuspected movement, the detective grasped the hat of the pretended Quaker, and next seized his wig, which came off readily in his hands, displaying to the gaze of the astonished passengers the dark hair and the face of a man of thirty-five, instead of an old man of over sixty.

"The pickpocket that jumped from the train!" exclaimed Paul, in excitement.

"I recognize him now," said the conductor. "This is clearly a plot to get you into trouble."

"Yea, verily," chimed in the witty young man.

"I'll clip your feathers some time, young man!" said Denton, scowling at the speaker.

"My Quaker friend," said the detective, "you are wanted for that little affair on the cars the other day."

He produced a pair of handcuffs. Luke Denton struggled vigorously, but the conductor assisted, and his hands were soon securely fastened.

"I congratulate you, Paul," said the conductor.

"It was a mean plot, and might have succeeded. But I never doubted you."

"I know you didn't, Mr. Bates. I shall never forget that," said Paul, gratefully.

"I came near succeeding," said Denton, grimly. "The next time I will wholly succeed."

"Perhaps not," rejoined the detective. "Your disguise was very good, Mr. Denton; but there was one thing you forgot."

"What is that?"

"To wear gloves. Any one would know that the hands did not belong to an old man. Besides, Quakers don't generally wear rings. I suspected you from the first."

"What a consummate fool I was!" muttered Denton, in disgust. "I ought to have thought of that."

CHAPTER XIII.

GRACE DEARBORN AT HOME.

Grace Dearborn sat before the fire in her aunt's handsome house, with a writing-desk in her lap. Before her was a sheet of note-paper on which she had commenced writing a list of names.

Her aunt sat near her, dictating a list of persons who were to receive cards of invitation to a party which she proposed giving in honor of her niece's birthday.

Grace had been writing busily for some time.

"Any one else, Aunt Caroline?" she asked.

"I believe I have included every one. Let me think. Oh, I came near forgetting Major Ashton. How stupid of me!"

"Major Ashton," repeated Grace, as she wrote the name.

"It would have been singular if we had forgotten to include him," said the elder lady.

"I did not forget him," returned Grace.

"Then why did you not remind me?"

"I suppose because I was not very anxious to have him invited."

"Yet he did you the honor of offering you his hand?"

"He may have considered it an honor; I didn't," said Grace, decidedly.

"At all events it was a compliment."

"Be it so! If he would accept his rejection as final I should not mind, but on the two or three occasions since when we have met he has tried to introduce the subject again. He does not seem willing to take no for an answer."

"Why not reconsider the matter, Grace? He is rich——"

"As if I cared for that."

"Well, he is fashionable, and is met everywhere in society. He would give his wife a desirable position."

"Will that compensate for the lack of love, Aunt Caroline?"

"Perhaps not, but love would come in time."

"Love must come *before* marriage in my case, Aunt Caroline. With Major Ashton it would never come afterward."

"You speak very decidedly, Grace."

"No more so than I feel. To be quite frank with you, I am more than indifferent to Major Ashton. I positively dislike him."

"Why? Can you assign any reason?"

"None that will fully explain my feelings. The fact is, I cannot myself account for the antipathy with which he inspires me. It seems almost instinctive. Without knowing anything against him I feel convinced that he is a bad and dangerous man."

"This is silly, Grace."

"It may be so, but I can't help it."

"You do not object to my inviting him to your party?"

"No. I have no right to do that, or rather I do not wish to, since it would be a gratuitous slight. He must come, of course, though I would rather he were away."

"That is all, then, unless any other name occurs to you."

"There is one other name, Aunt Caroline," said Grace, hesitatingly.

"Well?"

"Mr. Vernon."

"What Mr. Vernon?"

"Mr. Frederic Vernon, the artist."

"But, Grace, he is not in society. He does not belong to our circle."

"He is a gentleman, Aunt Caroline, and is worthy of social recognition."

"My dear child, he is very poor. I doubt whether he has a dress suit to appear in."

"That is his affair. He may not come, but it will be polite in us to invite him."

"You are rather quixotic, Grace."

"Why do you think so? I know Mr. Vernon to be well educated, and possessed of culture and refinement in a higher degree than many of the gentlemen who will receive invitations. I feel like recognizing him as an equal. Do you seriously object?"

"Oh, no! Send him a card if you wish. I only wished to set before you the singularity of inviting a poor, obscure artist to a fashionable party. We may be criticised."

"We propose to please ourselves, not the critics, Aunt Caroline," answered Grace, with a curl of the lip. "Now, there is one on your list whom I think much more unfit than Mr. Vernon, who is qualified to appear anywhere among gentlemen and ladies."

"To whom do you refer, Grace?"

"To Miss Framley."

"Do you know anything against her? She was recently introduced to me at a party, and made herself very agreeable. I could not very well help sending her a card."

"I know she is vulgar, and mean in money matters. Before I ever met her I got an insight into her character from a chance conversation which I overheard between herself and a friend in a street car."

"She visits at good houses."

"Oh, yes, I believe her father is rich, and I know they live in handsome style, but that doesn't save her from being vulgar and ill-bred."

"You are disposed to be too critical, Grace. It won't do to judge our fashionable acquaintances too rigidly. We must take the world as we find it."

"Smiling on those who are prosperous, and frowning on those who are not wealthy. We must, in other words, apply the standard of gold to all."

"No; that is overstating it. But if we find persons in good society we may feel safe in associating with them; then, if we prove mistaken, we can throw the responsibility on society. To be deceived in good company is excusable."

"You judge such matters from a worldly standpoint, Aunt Caroline."

"Oh, well, I am a woman of the world, my dear," said Mrs. Sheldon, shrugging her shoulders. "Well, that completes our list, and we can prepare the cards at our leisure."

The same evening, about eight o'clock, the servant entered Miss Dearborn's presence, and said:

"There is a young man at the door who wishes to see you."

"Who is it? Did he give you his card?"

"I don't believe he has any, Miss Grace," said the girl, laughing. "It's a boy about sixteen, and a little girl."

"Oh, it's my train boy!" exclaimed Grace, with animation.

Soon Paul and his little sister entered the room.

Our hero's manner was modest, but self-possessed, while Grace clung to him bashfully.

"I am glad to see you, Paul," said the young lady, with a bright smile.

"Thank you, Miss Dearborn."

"So this is your little sister, and my little namesake. How do you do, my dear child?"

Grace answered, bashfully, that she was very well.

"You see, Miss Dearborn, Grace is wearing the cloak you were kind enough to give her."

"And very well it becomes her, too. Is your mother well, Paul?"

"Yes, Miss Dearborn, thank you."

"I suppose she keeps house with Grace while you are away during the day?"

"Yes; but she also sews when she has an opportunity."

"I suppose she is not very well paid sometimes?"

"Very poorly at the best; but in some cases those who employ her are very mean. Now, there was Miss Framley——"

"Miss Framley!" repeated Grace, with interest. "Tell me the story."

Paul did tell the story already familiar to us.

"And this person is to be present at my party!" thought Grace, with an uncontrollable feeling of disgust. "I shall find it hard to be ordinarily polite to her."

"You must not think all ladies are as inconsiderate, Paul," she said. "Has your mother leisure to do some sewing for me?"

"She will be glad to do so, Miss Dearborn."

"Then, if you can call here to-morrow evening, I will have a bundle ready. I shall pay her double the price she charged Miss Framley."

"You are very kind, Miss Dearborn, and my mother will be overjoyed. I do not wish her to sew at all, but she is unwilling to give it up."

Paul and his sister remained an hour, Grace exerting herself far more to entertain them than she would have done had they been fashionable callers.

"How did you like her, Gracie?" asked Paul, as they were walking homeward.

"She's awful nice, Paul," said the little girl.

"So I think," said Paul.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ARTIST'S SECRET.

Frederic Vernon sat in his studio, toying with his brush. The canvas was before him, but he seemed to be in a brown study.

"What has got into me?" he asked himself, impatiently. "I cannot fix my mind upon my work. I am no longer on the verge of destitution, or compelled to labor for a mere pittance; yet my mind is less at ease than when I hardly knew where the next day's food was to come from."

Vernon's circumstances had improved. He had taken a lighter and more cheerful studio, and moved with his mother into better rooms. He was no longer forced to court the penurious patronage of young ladies like Miss Framley, and, thanks to the influence of Miss Dearborn, he was never without some work in hand. Yet, though he ought to have been cheerful, he found himself restless, and his work often had to wait upon his moods.

"Frederic, what is the matter with you?" asked his mother, earnestly, one day.

"Why do you ask, mother? I am well," he answered, evasively.

"You have lost your appetite, and your mind seems preoccupied. Is anything troubling you?"

"Anything troubling me?" he asked, with a forced smile. "What a strange idea!"

"Nay, my son; you cannot conceal it from your mother's eyes that something is amiss with you. What is it?"

"I am sure I cannot tell, mother."

"Is not your work proceeding well, Frederic?"

"Oh, yes. I had another order to-day."

"You should look happy, then, my son. Compare your position to-day with what it was three months since. Then——"

"I was almost a beggar, mother."

"True."

"Forced to paint portraits for mean, shoddy people for a mere song."

"Yes. But things have changed with you now, Frederic."

"Yes, thanks to Providence—and Grace Dearborn."

Unconsciously he pronounced this name with a tenderness which revealed to his mother something that he had not intended she should know. A look of intelligence overspread her face.

"I begin to see how it is, my boy," she said, gently.

"How what is, mother?"

"I think I understand what is the matter with you."

"Have you turned seeress?" he asked, smiling faintly.

"No; but I can minister to a mind diseased when I know the nature of the disease."

"Well, what is my disease, mother mine?" he asked, lightly.

"Frederic, you are in love!"

"In love!" he repeated, flushing. "Then perhaps you can tell with whom I am in love?"

"I think I can."

"Say on, mother."

"You love Grace Dearborn."

He started, and his face flushed.

"What makes you think that, mother?" he asked, slowly.

"You face would tell me if I had no other evidence. Is it not true?"

"Well, mother, you have my secret," he answered, after a pause. "You know my disease. Now canst thou minister to a mind diseased?"

"Perhaps so."

"I know what you would say. You would tell me to root out the foolish fancy from my heart, and devote myself unflinchingly to my art. Well, mother, I have tried it, and I have failed."

"You mistake me, Frederic. If you feel that your love for this young lady is deep and earnest, such a love as comes but once in a life-time, let her know of it, and give her a chance to accept or reject it."

"Mother, are you mad? Do you know that Grace Dearborn is a wealthy heiress—that she moves in the most exclusive society of Chicago—that she is admired by many who are rated as eligible matches?"

"Yes, I know all that—or I have guessed it from what you have told me. And what then?"

"Do you think of the difference between us? What am I?"

"You are an artist, a gentleman, and a man of talent."

"Even were it so, I earn, for my entire income, less in all probability than this young lady spends for her wardrobe in a single year."

"That may be, Frederic."

"And yet you bid me hope?"

"Yes, I bid you hope. If Miss Dearborn is what I think she is, she will not set an undue estimate upon wealth. She will understand how many vulgar and ill-bred men possess it, and will rate higher the talent, the refinement, and the culture of a gentleman, and the good heart that makes him ever a loyal and affectionate son. Such a man cannot fail to make a desirable husband."

"Ah, mother," said Vernon, smiling, "you are a mother, and, like all mothers, you overrate your son. If Grace would but look upon me with your eyes, perhaps I might hope. As it is, were I to open my lips to her, I should only subject myself to the mortification of having my suit contemptuously spurned."

"That would never be. Even if rejected, there would be nothing to injure your pride or bring a blush of mortification to your cheek."

"I think you are right there, mother. Grace is too gentle, too much of a lady, to let me see how unjustifiable were my hopes."

"Frederic, will you be guided by me in this matter?"

"Let me hear you advice first, mother. Then I will decide."

"Try to make yourself more worthy of her. Make the most of your talent. Become something more than a portrait painter. Become a great artist; and when all men acknowledge your talent, Miss Dearborn will be proud to accept your devotion, and to reward it. Is my advice good?"

"Mother, you put new life into me," said the young man, his face glowing with new hope. "I have always wished to become a true artist. I am a portrait painter because poverty made it necessary."

"And you would become an artist if you could?"

"Yes; it is my strongest wish."

"Then form the plan of some great picture, select some worthy and inspiring subject, devote your leisure to it, and think that you are working for her you love."

"I will mother. You are not only my best friend, but my wisest counselor. Henceforth I shall feel that I have an object for which to labor."

Frederic Vernon returned to his studio with quickened steps, and resumed work with an ardor he had not felt since Grace Dearborn sat in his studio as the subject of his brush. It was some time before a suitable idea came to him, but at last it flashed upon him, and he gave to his picture all the time he could save from his sittings.

In the midst of his labors there appeared to him one day the postman.

It was a dainty missive he held in his hand, addressed, in delicate chirography, to Frederic Vernon, Esq.

Vernon opened it, and read with a quickened movement of the heart a card of invitation to a party given by Mrs. Caroline Sheldon, to celebrate the birthday of her niece, Miss Grace Dearborn.

Vernon's face lighted up with joy.

"She has not forgotten me, then," he said to himself.

Then came the thought, "Shall I go?" Would

he feel at home in the fashionable circle to which he would be a stranger? He hesitated, but it was not for long.

"Since Grace bids me, for I know it was at her suggestion that I am invited, I will attend."

Just then his studio was invaded by a young lady, upon whose portrait he was engaged. She did not come alone. With her was Major Ashton, who has already been named as the unsuccessful suitor of Grace.

Vernon laid down the invitation hastily, but it was still open, and Major Ashton, who was observant, saw it, and a glance revealed to him its contents.

His face betrayed his surprise and annoyance.

"Is it possible that Miss Dearborn has invited this portrait painter to her party?" he asked himself.

Then his eyes dwelt critically on the refined and handsome face of the artist, and a vague feeling of jealousy sprang up within him, for he was still firmly resolved upon marrying Grace.

"But no," he thought, recovering himself; "Grace would not stoop to a fellow like that. She only wishes to patronize him."

CHAPTER XV.

A FELLOW-CONSPIRATOR.

Stephen Palmer, since his discomfiture, had not visited his step-mother or Grace. He felt that he hated the whole family, but most of all Paul. A bully never forgives the one, boy or man, who humiliates him; and Stephen felt the more mortified and incensed because our hero was so much younger than himself. Paul was his equal in height, but Stephen was broader and stronger, and but for his habits of intoxication, which robbed him of his strength, would have given his young brother a good deal of trouble.

When Luke Denton first unfolded to Stephen the plan he had in view for getting Paul into trouble, the young man was delighted.

"What a head you've got, Luke!" he said, admiringly.

"You like the plan, then?" said Luke, who did not object to flattery, though he had a very poor opinion of Stephen's understanding.

"It's capital! Couldn't be better!" exclaimed Stephen.

"I flatter myself it's rather a clever notion," said Luke, complacently. "You don't mind your brother being arrested for theft, then?"

"No, curse him! He sets up for a young saint, lectures me, who am almost old enough to be his father."

"Still, he is your brother," said Luke, dryly.

"A pretty sort of brother he is! Why, he wouldn't give me a penny to save me from starvation. The other day, when I was dead broke, and wanted to borrow a trifle, he made such a row that I had to give it up. There isn't any love lost between Paul and me."

"What will become of your mother and sister if Paul goes to prison?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," said Stephen, spitting viciously. "They may starve, for all I care."

"Upon my word, you're a relation worth having," said Luke, lazily puffing at a meerschaum pipe, for he was somewhat fastidious in his tastes, and disdained the common clay pipe which Stephen was not above using.

In truth, he despised the man with whom he nevertheless spent a considerable part of his time. There was a community of vice between them, but Luke was by nature refined and Stephen coarse.

"You wouldn't expect me to take the young

puppy's place and work for them, would you?" demanded Stephen.

"If I had a mother and sister, I would do just that," said Denton; and he spoke with sincerity, for, with all his want of principle, he was not without domestic affection.

"You wouldn't if you had folks like mine," said Stephen. "They don't care a pinch of snuff for me."

"Strange, when you are so attractive—have such taking ways," said Luke, ironically.

"Don't talk that way, Luke Denton, for I don't like it," returned Stephen, sullenly.

"You must let me have my little joke, Stephen. What would the world be without innocent mirth and friendly banter? So you like my plan?"

"Yes; but can you do it? Can you play the Quaker?"

"Dost thee doubt it?"

Stephen went off into a fit of laughter, though there didn't seem much to laugh at.

"Don't be frivolous. Restrain thy mirth, and fix thy mind on serious things," continued Luke, in a tone which he thought befitting the words.

Again Stephen betrayed symptoms of suffocation.

He went out with Denton, and assisted in dressing him in the costume which he hired for the successful personation of a quiet Friend.

"You'll do," he said, in high satisfaction.

"Dost thee feel sure, friend Stephen?"

"Oh, you're too funny for anything! Shall I go with you to the depot?"

"Not for a hundred dollars! It would destroy my reputation as a grave and upright Quaker to be seen in such disreputable company. I will go my ways alone, friend Stephen, but anon I will return and favor thee with a report of my success. If I don't fail, that young brother of yours will spend the night at the station-house."

"When he is tried I'll go and see it. It'll be nuts to me to see the young sneak tried for theft."

"I'll do my best to carry out your kind wishes for his welfare."

So Luke Denton set out on his errand, and we already know how he fared—how into the pit which he dug for another he fell himself. It was he and not Paul that spent the night in confinement.

Stephen waited impatiently for his return. He was eager to hear the details of the scheme, which he did not doubt would turn out as he wished. He wanted to hear how Paul acted when confronted with the charge of theft, and was impatient to have the afternoon pass away and Denton return.

But he waited in vain an hour or more after the train should be in, and still his friend did not appear.

Still, he did not dream that Denton himself had got into trouble, and was hindered by circumstances which he could not control from coming round to see him.

As time passed he became more restless and anxious.

"Denton might have come round to tell me," he muttered, peevishly. "He might have known that I would want to hear."

After awhile he concluded to go round to Denton's lodgings and see if he were in. He might be tired, and lying down.

It was not far he had to go. Luke Denton lived in more style than himself. When he was able he paid his rent, and when his purse was low he did not pay. If, after a time, his landlady became importunate, he removed to some other place. Probably he did not pay more rent—perhaps not as much—in the course of a year as Stephen, for he had a more persuasive and plausible manner, and could obtain credit on the score of his appearance, while Stephen's only went against him.

"Is Mr. Denton in?" asked Stephen, of the servant who answered his summons.

"No, sir."

"I suppose he has been in this evening?"

"No; he went away early in the day, and has not been home since."

"Can anything have happened to him?" thought Stephen. "No, he could take care of himself. But what a fool I am!" he exclaimed, with a sudden thought. "Of course he wouldn't come home in those Quaker clothes. Very likely he's carried 'em back to the place where he borrowed 'em."

So Stephen went round there, but found the place closed. There seemed no way of finding out what he wanted to know that night. Yes, there was. He would go round to the lodgings of Mrs. Palmer, and find out whether Paul had returned. If not, he would be safe in frightening them and demanding a loan, for, as usual, he was short of money.

"That's a good idea," he said to himself. "If Paul isn't at home, and has not been home, I'll know it's all right, and Luke will be round in good time to tell me how it all came out. Yes, that's the best thing I can do."

So Stephen bent his steps in the direction of his step-mother's humble home.

When his knock was heard, Paul said:

"Mother, that's Stephen's knock. Don't let him know where I am. I'll hide in the next room, and hear what he has to say. I suspect he had something

to do with the attempt that was made to get me into trouble to-day. Perhaps I can find out."

"If he asks me if you are here, what am I to say? I must tell the truth."

Paul whispered a few words in his mother's ear, and then hastily retreated into the inner room, while Mrs. Palmer went forward and opened the door to her stepson.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN UNWELCOME APPEARANGE.

"Good-evening, mamma!" said Stephen, airily, as he stepped over the threshold, and entered the room.

"Good-evening, Stephen," said Mrs. Palmer, soberly.

Stephen glanced hastily in all directions in search of Paul, and was glad to find no trace of him.

"Where's sister Grace?" he inquired.

"She has gone to bed, Stephen. She always goes to bed at eight o'clock."

"Has she spent that gold piece yet, that she was too selfish to lend to her poor brother?"

"That is a matter you can have no interest in, Stephen."

"None of my business, eh?"

"I didn't say that."

"You meant it, all the same. Where's Paul?"

"Do you know where he is? Have you come to tell me, Stephen?"

This question was asked with some appearance of anxiety, and Stephen at once jumped to the conclusion that all things had gone as he desired, and Paul

had fallen into the trap which had been prepared for him.

"Why, you don't mean to say the kid isn't at home?" said Stephen, an irrepressible smile tighting up his face. "Well, that's a good one. Most likely he's in the station-house. Ho, ho!"

"And you laugh at the thought!" said Mrs. Palmer, indignantly.

"Oh, he ain't any better than other boys. You think he can't do anything wrong, but I'll bet you half a dollar he's been caught stealing or something."

"Wherever Paul is, I am sure he is not in the station-house," said Mrs. Palmer, positively.

"Don't be too sure of that," chuckled Stephen. "He's a sly one, Paul is. You wouldn't think butter'd melt in his mouth, but I know him better'n you do."

"Paul is a good son and brother, and always has been."

"And I suppose I am not," sneered Stephen.

"You must question your own conscience on that subject," said Mrs. Palmer.

"You are only my step-mother. You don't expect me to support you and the kids, do you?" asked Stephen, coarsely.

"No; I only desire that you will let us alone. We

can get on without your help," returned the widow, with dignity.

"That is, if Paul remains all right; but you can't be sure of that. He may slip up any time, and become a boarder at the expense of the State."

"If you have come here to slander Paul, you can hardly expect that you will be welcome."

"Oh, well, I know that Paul is your idol. He can't do anything wrong. I shouldn't wonder if he was in a scrape now."

"What kind of a scrape? Don't leave me in suspense, Stephen."

Stephen Palmer was not over supplied with brains, and he was foolish enough to fall into the trap, and speak of what he could not be supposed to know.

"I heard a report," he said, "that Paul had been arrested for stealing in the Milwaukee train to-day."

"Where did you get your information?" asked Mrs. Palmer.

"She doesn't believe it," said Stephen to himself. "Never mind; she may have to before long."

"I don't care to mention where I heard it," he answered.

"It is not true."

"Perhaps it isn't; but if that's the case, why doesn't he come home?"

"He may have been detained by business."

"Oh, yes; very important business!" chuckled Stephen. "I guess he'll find it very important and pressing."

"Is that what you have come to tell me, Stephen Palmer?"

"No, not exactly. The fact is, Mrs. Palmer, I am hard up."

"I believe you always are."

"Right you are. The fact is, I am very unlucky. Nothing seems to go right with me. I have a hard struggle to get along."

"There's one remedy you might find, Stephen," said the widow, sternly.

"What is that?"

"Work."

"Work!" repeated Stephen, angrily. "And where am I to find work? Haven't I tried to get something to do everywhere?"

"I don't know; but from what I know of you, I presume not. A man who really wants to work won't go so long without it as you have."

"Much you know about it. I tell you everything is crowded. How much money do you think I have got left?"

"How should I know?"

"That's all," said Stephen, drawing a quarter from

his vest-pocket and flipping it up in the air. "Mrs. Palmer, you must help me."

"If you are hungry, Stephen, though it is a late hour, I will give you something to eat."

"Thank you! I don't want any of your cold victuals," sneered the vagabond.

"Then I can do nothing for you."

"Yes, you can. Give me the little girl's gold piece. You needn't pretend that she has spent it, for I know better."

"Whether that is the case or not, I decline to let you have it."

"Look here, widow," said Stephen, his brow darkening, "I ain't going to be trifled with or bluffed off; not this time. When down here before I wasn't quite myself, and that young puppy, Paul, thought it safe to bully me. Things are different now. I am perfectly sober, and I know what I'm about. So I tell you once more I want that money, and I advise you to get it for me, or else give me as much out of your own pocket."

"Surely you are not in earnest, Stephen Palmer. You won't persist in this unmanly demand?"

"Then you don't know me. Paul is not here to defend you now, and I advise you not to make me angry."

Stephen rose from his seat, and advanced toward

his step-mother with an ugly look on his mean, evil-looking face.

Mrs. Palmer started back, and uttered just one word:

"Paul!"

At the call, Paul, who had found it difficult to restrain himself from rushing into the room sooner, sprang through the door, and, his young face flaming with just indignation, confronted his step-brother.

CHAPTER XVII.

PAUL DEFENDS HIS MOTHER.

To say that Stephen was astonished hardly expresses the truth.

He stood with open mouth, staring at our hero, as if panic-stricken by his sudden appearance.

"Where did you come from?" he asked, amazement prevailing over every other sensation.

"From the next room, where I heard your contemptible attempt to extort money from my mother."

At another time Stephen would have resented this speech, but now he was anxious to find out what had happened to his friend, and how Paul had managed to escape the snare that had been so carefully laid for him.

"How long have you been at home?" he asked.

"I got home at the usual time. What makes you ask?"

"Did anything happen to-day?" asked Stephen.

Foolishly he was betraying himself, and Paul saw clearly that he knew of the plot, even if he were not concerned in it.

He resolved that Stephen should betray himself yet further."

"What should happen?" he asked.

"I heard you were arrested for theft," said Stephen.

"What kind of theft?"

"Stealing a wallet."

"Where did you hear it?"

"Never mind!" answered Stephen, sullenly. "I heard it, and that's enough."

"It seems then you were misinformed."

"Didn't you have any trouble at all?" asked Stephen, perplexed.

"Yes, something happened. A man pretended that I had stolen his wallet."

"Didn't I say so!" Stephen exclaimed, triumphantly.

"This Dutchman——" proceeded the train boy.

"Dutchman!" said Stephen, hastily. "I thought it was a Quaker."

"Now I think of it, it was a Quaker," said Paul, quietly.

"What made you say Dutchman?"

"I wanted to find out how much you knew about it. Did you know this Quaker?"

"Did I know the Quaker? I don't know any Quakers."

"I thought you might. In that case, you won't feel any interest in knowing what became of him."

"Did—did anything happen to him?" asked Stephen, in alarm.

"You seem anxious," said Paul, keenly.

"Don't trifle with me, boy. Tell me what happened to him. As you've told part of the story you may as well tell the rest."

"He proved to be no Quaker at all," said Paul. "If he was a friend of yours, as I conclude, I think you will have a chance to see him in court to-morrow."

"Arrested!" gasped Stephen, in dismay.

"Yes, his plan didn't succeed. It is probably a disappointment to him and to you, but it serves you both right for conspiring against a boy."

"Who said I had anything to do with it?" asked Stephen.

"You have let it out yourself. I don't want any further proof."

"After this base conspiracy against your stepbrother, Stephen Palmer," said the widow, with dignity, "I hope you will have the decency to stay away. Had you behaved with any decent regard to the tie that exists between us, I would not say this——"

"You'll repent this, Mrs. Palmer!" said Stephen,

his face showing the malice he felt. "You treat me like a dog, you and your son there. I'll be even with you yet."

He left the room and the house, slamming the door behind him, but he did not renew his demand for money.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GRACE DEARBORN'S PARTY.

The evening of Grace's birthday party arrived. A large number of invitations had been sent out, for Mrs. Sheldon had a large circle of acquaintances and friends. The daily papers had already mentioned the forthcoming party as likely to be one of the most memorable of the season.

Mrs. Sheldon determined to spare no expense to make it so. She was not vulgarly lavish, but there are occasions when she thought money should be spent freely. Moreover, she was determined to do what she could to secure a brilliant matrimonial alliance for her niece, of whose beauty she was justifiably proud. Indeed she was a natural match-maker, though she was compelled not to allow Grace to see her maneuvers too plainly, as nothing would have been more repugnant to the niece than to think she was set up as a prize in a matrimonial lottery.

A professional confectioner was given *carte blanche* for the supper, which was to be *recherche*, and the dec-

orations were put into the hands of a man whose taste was unimpeachable.

"Aunt Caroline," said Grace, "I am afraid you are going to large expense on my party."

"Why should I not, my dear?"

"It seems wasteful. How many poor families could be relieved by the money it will cost!"

"What a quixotic idea, Grace! In my opinion the poor have quite enough done for them. Would you have us give up all amusements for their sake?"

"No, I won't go so far as that. Still it ought to check undue extravagance to reflect that we have so many that are destitute among us."

"They shall have their turn, Grace. I am sure you spend a great deal of money on the poor."

"Not half enough, aunt."

"Then spend more, but in this matter don't object to my spending what I like."

"I know, my dear aunt, it is all done for my sake."

"And very properly, my dear. I have no daughter, and all my interest centers in you. By the way, I met Major Ashton in the street yesterday."

"Indeed!" said Grace, indifferently.

"Poor fellow, he looks downcast. Your repulse has wounded him sorely. He loved you deeply."

A silvery laugh from Grace greeted this announcement, made with due solemnity.

"Really, my dear aunt," she said, "I can't conceive of Major Ashton loving anybody as well as himself."

"You do him wrong, Grace."

"Perhaps so, but I do not believe it."

"He is coming to the party."

"I supposed he would," said Grace, shrugging her shoulders.

"And I do hope, Grace, you will treat him kindly."

"I shall treat him politely, Aunt Caroline, if that is what you mean. That is my duty, since he is to be our guest."

"Major Ashton could marry brilliantly."

"Let him, then."

"Everybody considers him an eligible *parti*."

"Then there is little cause for me to pity him. There are plenty who will have compassion on him, and console him for my coldness."

"You must admit that he is a thorough gentleman, Grace."

"My dear aunt, I am rather tired of Major Ashton as a topic of conversation. Suppose we drop him. I am ready to admit everything you desire—he is elegant, a good match, fascinating, if you will, but he will need to carry his fascinations to another market."

"She seems resolute," thought Mrs. Sheldon, "but

she may change her mind after all. Who was it said it is always best to begin with a little aversion?"

In fact, Mrs. Sheldon had gone so far as to encourage Major Ashton, and led him to think that there was hope for him after all. He was very ready to accept this assurance, because he desired to do so. There was no danger, however, of the major breaking his heart, for it was Grace's fortune he was in love with, not herself. In fact, he was so far from romantic that the idea crossed his mind that if the niece refused to have anything to do with him, he might perhaps take up with the aunt.

"Mrs. Sheldon is a well-preserved woman," he reflected, "fifteen years older than myself, perhaps, but her fortune is even greater than Miss Dearborn's, and would set my affairs right at once, besides insuring my comfort for the balance of my life. She must be worth at least a quarter of a million."

Thinking, then, of the widow as a *dernier resort*, he treated her with a flattering deference and courtly politeness that prepossessed her still more in his favor, though she had not the faintest idea of the direction of his thoughts with regard to herself.

At last the evening came. The house was a blaze of light and splendor. Carriage after carriage rolled up the street and deposited its load at Mrs. Sheldon's door.

Presently the rooms were well filled with elegantly dressed ladies and irreproachably attired young men, who, in turn, paid their respects to the givers of the party.

Grace was tastefully and even richly dressed, but suffered herself, in the matter of attire, to be eclipsed by more than one of her guests. Her aunt insisted on her wearing a superb diamond necklace belonging to herself, but she declined.

"No, aunt; I don't want to array myself in borrowed plumes," she said. "The necklace is yours; wear it yourself."

Which Mrs. Sheldon did at last. She was ready to lend it to her niece, but was not insensible to the glances of admiration which it attracted when displayed on her own neck.

"It must be worth twenty thousand dollars!" thought Major Ashton. "Really, the old girl is radiant. If she ever becomes Mrs. Major Ashton, in place of her niece resigned, I shall slyly substitute a necklace of paste and convert the jewels to my own use. It is sinful that so much good money should be locked up."

It was well for the major's popularity with Mrs. Sheldon that she could not read his thoughts. Her necklace was her most valued possession, and nothing

except actual need would have induced her to part with it.

Grace looked about from time to time for the young artist.

Finally she saw him approaching to salute her.

"I am glad to see you here, Mr. Vernon," she said, with a smile of welcome. "You are late."

"Yes, Miss Dearborn. I hope you will excuse it. As you are aware, I have few acquaintances here—indeed I do not often stray into such fashionable surroundings—and only came for a brief space, to show my appreciation of your kind courtesy in inviting me here, and to offer my congratulations on your birthday."

"Thank you, Mr. Vernon, they are welcome. I hope your mother is well."

"Very well, thank you, and I am sure she will feel proud of your inquiry."

"I believe most of my guests have arrived, and I may venture to leave my duties as assistant hostess. If you will favor me with your arm, I will walk about a little."

With a flush of gratification the artist tendered his arm, and the two promenaded through the elegant parlors, attracting general attention.

"Why, I declare!" said Miss Framley to her escort; "do you see that?"

"See what?"

"Miss Dearborn promenading with that young man?"

"Why shouldn't she? He is quite distinguished in his appearance."

"Distinguished?" repeated Miss Framley, with a sneer. "I guess you don't know him."

"He isn't a cook, is he—or a waiter?"

"No; but he is a poor portrait painter. Why, he painted my picture for twenty dollars, and he was glad of the job," said Miss Framley, who was innately vulgar.

"Poor devil! Then he must have been hard up," said the gentleman, to whom it occurred that this was an illustration of Miss Framley's meanness.

"Oh, yes, he was poor enough; but I believe he is doing a little better now. Still, it is singular that Miss Dearborn should single him out as her escort from so many. I wouldn't promenade with him!" continued the young lady, tossing her head.

"I ought to feel flattered that you prefer me, Miss Framley."

"Oh, you are quite a different kind of person," said the young lady, with a coquettish smile.

There was another who saw the two pass him with equal disgust, and more dissatisfaction. This was Major Ashton.

"Upon my soul!" he said to himself. "What can Grace Dearborn see in that beggar? I'll soon separate them!"

He stepped up with his usual assurance, and, bowing, said:

"May I venture to relieve this gentleman of his pleasant duty, and substitute myself in his place?"

"Not at present, Major Ashton," said Grace, coldly; "unless Mr. Vernon is weary of his charge."

"Far from it," said the young artist.

"Presuming puppy!" muttered Major Ashton, as the two passed on.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ARTIST'S RECREATION.

Whether Frederic Vernon read in Major Ashton's face the disgust he felt at the compliment Grace bestowed upon him in singling him out as her companion, I am not sure. It is clear, however, that the young artist cared little for it. He was enjoying the companionship of the only young lady who had ever had power to stir his heart, and for the moment did not allow himself to think of the distance between them.

Grace, on her part, was not insensible to the fact that Vernon, though poor, was as noble in appearance as any of her guests. The young artist had been remarkably extravagant in providing himself with a dress-suit of fine quality, and no one would argue his poverty from his appearance.

"I hope, Mr. Vernon," said the heiress, "that you have plenty of orders."

"Enough, at all events, to fill up my time," answered Vernon, "thanks, I am very sure, to your friendly recommendation."

"I feel entirely justified in recommending you," said Grace.

"It is friendly, nevertheless."

"I shall not dispute that, for I wish to be friendly."

"I am sincerely grateful for all your kindness, Miss Dearborn," said the artist, earnestly. "It has done me more good than perhaps you dream of."

"I am sincerely glad to hear it, Mr. Vernon."

"Before painting your portrait I will confess that I was tempted at times to despair. I had been for a long time struggling hard, and apparently with little hopes of success. My sitters were unwilling to pay me even the paltry price I asked."

"I believe the young lady we have just passed was one of your sitters?" said Grace, referring to Miss Framley, who had bestowed her attentions upon a callow youth of eighteen, failing to secure a more eligible partner.

"Miss Framley? Yes; but I have small cause to desire such a patronage. She stared at me as I entered, as if surprised to meet me here."

"I trust it did not pain you much," said Grace, archly.

Vernon laughed.

"I hope I shall have no worse troubles," he said. "To that I am resigned."

"Then I shall be quite at ease about you on that

score. And now, Mr. Vernon, I fear I must ask you to hand me to a seat, as my other guests will be claiming my attention."

"Thank you for favoring me so far, Miss Dearborn," said Vernon, as he complied with the young lady's request.

The young artist caught sight of one of his late sitters, and presenting himself, was graciously received, so that he was not compelled to be a wall-flower.

"It would be like his impudence," thought Miss Framley, "for the penniless artist to make up to me. If he does, I will soon send him about his business."

Miss Framley did not have the opportunity, however, to give Vernon the rebuff she had in view, as he took no notice of her save by a slight bow. This annoyed her, and she straightway charged him mentally with ingratitude in slighting one of his patrons. Consistency was not one of Miss Framley's strong points. Had she seen him leaning against the wall unnoticed, she would have been pleased; but Vernon, who was gifted with unusual external attractions, seemed to have no difficulty in making his way, and was kindly received by young ladies whom Miss Framley was compelled to acknowledge as her social superiors. She looked on discontentedly from a corner where she was temporarily pining from neglect, when Major Ashton approached. He was far from admiring Miss Framley,

but he knew that her father was reputed rich, and he thought it best to keep in with her as a possible resort in the event of his other plans failing.

"Are you in a reverie, Miss Framley?" he asked.

"Not precisely, Major Ashton," responded the young lady, smiling with pleasure at being noticed by so desirable an acquaintance; "I was resting for a moment. Really fashionable life is so exhausting—parties and engagements nearly every night in the week. However, you know all about that."

"I am not so easily fatigued, perhaps, as if I belonged to the fairer sex. Will you accept my arm for a promenade, or are you too much fatigued?"

"Oh, I am quite rested, I assure you," said the young lady, joyfully.

"I see the portrait painter is here," remarked Major Ashton, with a carelessness he did not feel.

"Yes; isn't it strange Miss Dearborn should invite him?" returned Miss Framley, eagerly. "Really almost a beggar, as you may say."

"Is he poor, then?" asked the major.

"He was miserably poor, but I believe he is doing better now. Why, he used to paint portraits for twenty dollars!"

"Hardly enough to pay for the materials," said Ashton, shrugging his shoulders.

"Oh, he was glad enough to get orders at that

price. I took pity on him myself, and gave him an order."

"Very considerate of you, upon my word!" said Major Ashton.

If there was sarcasm in his words, Miss Framley, who was not over sharp, except in money matters, did not perceive it.

"I always try to be considerate." she responded, complacently. "But, as you were saying, it is very singular Miss Dearborn should pay so much attention to a man in his sphere of life."

"I think it was you who said it, Miss Framley; however, I am disposed to agree with you."

"And then she selects him as her first escort, and lowers herself, as one may say, to his level."

"Perhaps she feels a special interest in him," suggested Major Ashton.

There was a suspicion of jealousy in his tone as he said this.

"Oh, dear, no! That would be too ridiculous. She may feel a patronizing interest in him, and think it will do him good in the way of business to pay him attention. Grace is so quixotic, you know, Major Ashton."

Grace would have been amazed had she heard herself spoken of so familiarly by a young lady to whom she had hardly spoken a dozen words in her life.

"I suppose you are quite intimate with her?" said Miss Framley's escort, pointedly.

"Why, no; I can't say we are intimate," said Miss Framley, slowly; "although, of course, I know her very well."

"I infer from what you say that I shall not be likely to meet the portrait painter at your house, Miss Framley."

"Decidedly not!" said the young lady, tossing her head. "I hope I choose my company better. I am sure I don't know what ma would say if I should introduce such a person into the house—ma is *very* particular."

"And very properly, I am sure."

Major Ashton politely refrained from laughing, though he happened to know that Mrs. Framley, who was now so very particular, had been a very respectable saleswoman in a small dry-goods store up to the time of her marriage with Jeremiah Framley, who was at that time a drummer in the employ of a second-class house in the city.

"Miss Framley is very amusing," thought the major, "though I fancy she would be a great bore to a matrimonial partner. I hope it may never be my sad destiny to marry her; though, as her father is rich, I may some day sacrifice myself to her."

How we deceive ourselves! Miss Framley was un

der the impression that the stylish major, of whose attentions she was proud, was struck with her, and she was already speculating as to the prominent place she might take in society as Mrs. Major Ashton, when a waltz struck up.

"Shall we dance, or are you too fatigued?" asked the major.

"Oh, not at all! It has quite passed off, I assure you," said the delighted young lady, and they moved off to the inspiring strains of one of Strauss' waltzes.

Miss Framley didn't appear to advantage as a dancer. Her figure was dumpy, and she had no ear for music, so that her pace was somewhat heavy and elephantine. The major was a graceful dancer, but it was all he could do to make up for his partner's deficiencies. He soon tired of the attempt, and handed his unwilling partner to a seat.

"I was not at all tired, major," she said, insinuatingly.

"But I was," he answered, rather abruptly.

He took leave with a bow, and five minutes later found the opportunity which he had been seeking all the evening to speak to Miss Dearborn.

CHAPTER XX.

A PERSEVERING SUITOR.

Grace saw the approach of Major Ashton, and surmised his object in seeking an interview. She would have avoided it, but she was at the moment unengaged, and Major Ashton was one of her guests. She owed him a measure of courtesy.

When he offered his arm she accepted it with a bow, which she tried to accompany with a cordial manner.

"I congratulate you on the success of your party, Miss Dearborn," the major commenced.

"Thank you, Major Ashton. Then I may consider it such?"

"Decidedly. I trust it may prove auspicious, since it is given in honor of your birthday."

"Thank you again. You are very kind."

"Shall we go into the conservatory?" asked Major Ashton, as they approached the door that led into it.

"As you please," said Grace, hesitating.

She was considering how soon she could politely get rid of the major.

They entered the conservatory, which at the time was occupied by another couple.

Major Ashton glanced at them with a frown, for they were in his way.

Presently they went back into the parlor, and his opportunity was found.

"Miss Dearborn—Grace," he began, hurriedly, "I have been waiting for this chance to speak to you. I hope you have reconsidered your answer to my suit. I hope you have reflected how much my happiness is involved in your smiling upon my love."

"I am sorry you have renewed the subject, Major Ashton," said Grace, her cheek flushing with the annoyance she felt.

"I could not do otherwise. I am pleading for life."

The words and tone were earnest enough, but failed to convey to Grace the idea of sincerity.

She was persuaded that Major Ashton, less than any of her acquaintances, was in danger of dying of a broken heart, and she felt provoked that he should try to impose upon her.

"Let me suggest, Major Ashton," she said, "that you have ill chosen your opportunity. To-night, at least, you might spare me."

"Spare you!" repeated Major Ashton, in evident pique. "Is then what I say so disagreeable to you?"

"It is unwelcome to-night at least."

"Then will you grant me another interview?" he asked, earnestly. "Doubtless you are right. I should not take up your time to-night. I will leave you at once if you will let me call to-morrow, or any other day soon."

"You may call, if you desire it, but I must say, plainly, that it will do no good. The answer I have already given you is final."

"I am not accustomed to be treated with such disdain," said Ashton, biting his lip. "It may seem conceited to say so, but there is more than one young lady here to-night who would gladly accept what I have offered you. Miss Framley for instance."

"Then let me suggest that you offer your heart where it will be gladly accepted," returned Grace, calmly.

If Major Ashton fancied he could excite Miss Dearborn's jealousy, the fancy was a very ridiculous one.

She was entirely willing he should bestow himself wherever he chose—even upon Miss Framley.

"I hope you don't think I would throw myself away upon a vulgar shoddyite like Miss Framley."

"Miss Framley is my guest, Major Ashton," said

Grace, with quiet dignity. "It doesn't become me to hear any words to her discredit."

"I think I can penetrate your secret, Miss Dearborn," said Major Ashton, with a sneer. "You look with favor upon that poverty-stricken portrait painter with whom you so ostentatiously paraded early in the evening."

"You forget yourself, Major Ashton," said Grace, with chilling hauteur.

She dropped his arm, and left the conservatory unattended, her cheek flushed, and her heart stirred with indignation.

She came nearer to hating Major Ashton at that moment than ever before. He had insulted her, and though she was not one to make a scene, she was not likely soon to forgive or to forget it.

Yet there was something in his words which was not altogether displeasing. They let in a sudden light, by which she read her own heart, and, with a quicker pulsation, she was compelled to confess that she did feel an interest in the young artist.

Just then, too, lifting her eyes, she met the gaze of Frederic Vernon fixed upon her with an intensity which she could not fail to interpret.

"He loves me!" she thought, and the thought gave her no displeasure.

She had no time to analyze her feelings, but of this she felt certain.

Vernon, meeting her gaze, turned away in some confusion, but Grace was mistress of herself. Approaching him, she said, smiling:

"I hope you are enjoying yourself, Mr. Vernon."

"More so than I anticipated, Miss Dearborn," he answered, recovering himself.

"Then you did not anticipate enjoyment?" she asked.

"Nay, do not misunderstand me. I am of late a stranger to such gay scenes, and I did not expect to meet many whom I knew, or with whom I could converse."

"There is Miss Framley," said Grace.

"Miss Framley does not feel inclined to notice me. I think she considers me too humble for recognition."

"That is amusing, certainly," said Grace.

"It is quite true."

"I sympathize with you, Mr. Vernon. Do not let Miss Framley's cruelty weigh upon you."

"I can bear it since I have your sympathy," answered Vernon, smiling brightly.

"How handsome he is when he smiles," thought Grace. "It is clear he is a gentleman, notwithstanding the sneer of Major Ashton."

"Pardon me if I leave your parlor early, Miss Dear-

born," said Vernon. "I may not readily gain opportunity of seeing you to take leave, and do so now."

"But why do you leave us so early, Mr. Vernon?"

"My mother will sit up till I return, and for her the hour is already late."

"Then I will make no protest. A mother should always be considered."

"I was sure you would understand my reason. I shall be able to tell her that I have enjoyed myself. She wished me to come."

"You must introduce me to your mother some day, Mr. Vernon. I want to know her."

"And she will be delighted to know you."

Of all the gay company Frederic Vernon was the first to go.

"So the portrait painter is gone!" said Major Ashton to Miss Framley, whom he ran across once more.

"Yes. Poor fellow, he was evidently out of his element, and anxious to get away."

"Could not you detain him, Miss Framley, by your powerful fascinations?"

"As if I would try!" returned Miss Framley, tossing her head.

"You are too cruel!"

"He looked at me as if he would like to claim acquaintance," said Miss Framley, complacently, "but

I can tell you, Major Ashton, I am very careful about my company."

"But he was an acquaintance of yours," said Ashton.

"In the same way that ma knows the butcher and baker. I don't choose to let him think we are social equals. American society is too promiscuous, as ma often says. Don't you think so yourself, Major Ashton?"

"No doubt your honored mother is right," answered Ashton, with a mocking smile.

"How nice it must be to live in England, and meet those dear, delightful earls, and dukes, and barons!" exclaimed Miss Framley, rapturously. "Did you ever know an earl or a duke, Major Ashton?"

"Yes, I made the acquaintance of an earl once. We were passengers on the same steamer."

"Dear me, what a privilege! And how did he look?"

"To the best of my remembrance he had the same number of eyes and ears as the rest of us."

"But didn't he look very *distangay?* Oh, how I should have admired to know him!"

"He seemed very plain-looking, and he was perhaps the worst dressed man among the passengers."

"That is so strange!"

Miss Framley's idea of an earl or a duke was a tall,

majestic person, attired in purple and fine linen, with high-bred, aristocratic features, that might readily distinguish him from inferior beings.

"Oh, how I envy you the privilege of knowing him! Did you really become intimate?"

"Very!" answered Major Ashton, concealing under a grave face the amusement he felt. "He told me confidentially how disagreeable his mother-in-law, the Countess of Somerset, was, and asked my advice as to how to manage her."

"How interesting!" ejaculated Miss Framley, opening wide her eyes, as she speedily swallowed the major's words.

She felt that it was something to know the intimate mind of an earl. She remained till the end of the party, and went home fully persuaded that Major Ashton admired her.

CHAPTER XXI.

MISS FRAMLEY'S MORTIFICATION.

"Paul," said Mrs. Palmer, "are you at leisure this evening?"

"Yes, mother, if you have anything for me to do."

Paul had another plan for the evening, but he felt that duty required him to defer that, and place himself at the service of his mother. In this he showed a good feeling and sense of duty which may well be copied by such of my readers as are young and dependent upon their parents for more than they fully understand.

"I don't like to take up your time when you have been all day at work for us."

"Never mind that, mother. Why, I enjoy my work. I should feel lost without it."

"I have got Miss Dearborn's work done, Paul, and if you can spare time, I should like to have you take it to her."

"I am perfectly ready to do that, mother," said Paul, promptly. "I shall be glad to see her on my own account."

"I don't know how much I ought to charge her for the work," said Mrs. Palmer, reflecting.

"I don't believe she will object to your price, mother, whatever it is. She is quite a different young lady from Miss Framley."

"Then you may say two dollars, if she asks the price," said his mother.

The work was neatly done up, and Paul took charge of it.

At about eight o'clock he ascended the steps of Mrs. Sheldon's handsome house, and rang the bell.

"Is Miss Dearborn at home?" he asked of the servant who answered his summons.

"Yes," answered Grace, smiling, for she chanced to hear the question as she passed through the hall. "Good-evening, Paul. How is your little sister?"

"Very well, Miss Dearborn. If she had known I was coming here, she would have wanted to come, too."

"You must bring her soon."

"Won't she trouble you, Miss Dearborn?"

"Children never trouble me. I like them. Come in and sit down," for Paul was still standing in the vestibule. "I suppose you have brought my work."

"Yes; mother has finished it."

"Sarah, you may take the bundle."

"Won't you look at it, Miss Dearborn? Perhaps it may not suit you."

"I am not afraid of that, Paul. Still I will examine it."

The examination was followed by cordial praise, which was deserved, for Mrs. Palmer was an admirable needlewoman.

"Did your mother mention the price, Paul?" asked the young lady.

"She named two dollars."

Grace drew out a pearl porte-monnaie, and drew therefrom a bill, which she handed to Paul.

"Give your mother that, with my compliments on her good work." she said.

Paul saw that it was a five-dollar bill.

"I am afraid I can't change this," he said.

"It is not necessary," returned Grace, with a smile.

"But it is a five. I said two dollars."

"Tell your mother that if she thinks this too much, she may regard the balance as a gift."

"You are very generous, Miss Dearborn," said Paul, his eyes brightening with the thought of his mother's pleasure when she received such liberal payment.

"If I am, I can take small credit for it, since I am blessed with a fortune."

"I wish all rich people were like you," said Paul, impulsively.

"Don't flatter me, Paul. I am probably vain enough already."

"I may thank you at any rate, Miss Dearborn."

Paul rose to go, not wishing to intrude further upon the young lady.

"If you are going home directly, will you object to taking some more work to your mother?"

"I shall be very glad to do it."

"Then wait here five minutes and I will send Sarah to you with a bundle. Say to your mother that I shall be able to give her almost constant employment, as I am interested in a number of poor families for whom I have garments made up as the most useful gifts I can bestow upon them."

"This will be good news to mother."

"Then I shall be the better pleased if I can oblige her while securing excellent work."

Paul went home directly, with the more alacrity because he had such good news to communicate. His mother, as he anticipated, was very much elated by her good fortune.

"It is so different from Miss Framley's way of dealing," she said.

"There are not many young ladies like Miss Dearborn," said Paul.

"You are right there, Paul. If there were more, the world would be better off."

Just then the postman called with a postal for Mrs. Palmer.

It ran thus:

"Miss Framley will be obliged if Mrs. Palmer will call or send to her house to-morrow evening for some work. She hopes that Mrs. Palmer will not be unreasonable in her charges."

"That's cool!" ejaculated Paul.

"I thought Miss Framley did not intend to give me any more work," said his mother.

"So she said, but it seems she has changed her mind."

"I didn't think she would."

"Oh, she probably finds it difficult to get her work done as well elsewhere, and finds it for her interest to employ you again."

"She will think any fair price unreasonable."

"Of course she will. If you will be guided by my advice, mother, you will decline to take her work again."

"It is certainly unpleasant working for one who is unwilling to pay fairly."

"Then don't do it. Miss Dearborn said she would give you enough work to occupy your time, and you know she will pay you handsomely."

"Then if you think best, Paul," said Mrs. Palmer, doubtfully, for it seemed a rash thing, in the light of her former struggles, to decline work.

"I do think it best, mother, and I shall be glad to call there myself and give her your answer."

The next evening, therefore, Paul repaired to the Framley mansion, and found the young lady at home. He was not invited in, but Miss Framley came to the door to speak to him.

"You sent a postal to my mother, Miss Framley," he commenced.

"Oh, you are the Palmer boy," said Miss Framley, condescendingly.

"My name is Paul Palmer."

"I have decided to let your mother have my work again, though she charged an extortionate price for the last."

The fact was, as Paul surmised, that Miss Framley had found it impossible to find any other seamstress whose work pleased her as much as his mother's, but of course she did not choose to admit that. She preferred to have it understood that she was conferring a favor.

"My mother never charges extortionate prices," said Paul, gravely.

"As a boy, you are not a suitable judge," said the young lady, sharply. "You may say to your mother

that there are plenty who would like to do my work but as she is a widow, and poor, I have taken pity on her, and——"

"There is no occasion for that, Miss Framley," said Paul. "My mother can get along very well without your work."

"It seems to me you are taking a great deal on yourself, young man," said Miss Framley, sharply. "I have a great mind to give out my work elsewhere."

"You will have to do that, Miss Framley," said Paul, with evident satisfaction, "for my mother requests me to say that she cannot do any more work for you."

"Did she tell you to say this?" demanded Miss Framley, astonished.

"Yes."

"I never heard of such a thing!" ejaculated the mortified young lady. "Are you sure this is not a message of your own?"

"Quite so. Miss Dearborn has promised her as much work as she can do, at about three times the rate you are willing to pay. Good-evening!"

"I believe I hate Miss Dearborn?" inwardly commented the vexed Miss Framley. "Somehow she interferes with me in everything I undertake. If she chooses to throw away her money, I sha'n't. And

now where am I to find another seamstress like Mrs. Palmer? I wish I hadn't offended her."

But it was too late. Miss Framley must pay the penalty of her meanness.

Paul walked home, feeling that the day had been an unusually satisfactory one. Yet how little can we foresee the future? Within the next twenty-four hours a great danger menaced him.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN UNEXPECTED CHANGE.

Paul was on his way home, when, in turning a corner, he came face to face with his step-brother, Stephen. The latter was much better dressed than when Paul last saw him. He had thrown aside the shabby and soiled suit, which had seen service so long that it looked entitled to be relieved upon a pension. He wore now a new suit, which did not fit him particularly well, having evidently been purchased at a ready-made clothing store, but it was at least new, and made Stephen look as respectable as the nature of the case would admit.

"Hallo, young one!" said Stephen, with a grin; "where are you bound?"

"I'm going home," answered Paul, surveying his half-brother with a puzzled glance.

"How's the old lady?"

"Do you mean my mother?"

"Of course I do. I don't mean Grace."

"She's well," answered Paul, briefly.

"She don't like me, and she don't treat me well,"

said Stephen; "but I don't bear no malice. The world is big enough for both of us."

"I hope you are prospering," said Paul, again regarding the new suit.

"Yes; I'm getting along better'n I was. How do you like my clothes?"

"They are an improvement on your old ones."

"I should say so myself. Come, Paul, you're a smart boy, if you are rather cranky sometimes. Being as we are brothers, I'll stand treat. Come in and take a drink."

He made a movement to enter a saloon close at hand, but Paul held back.

"Thank you all the same, Stephen," he said. "but I don't drink."

"Don't be afraid. It'll do you good."

Paul shook his head. He knew it would do no good to argue the point, so he simply declined once more.

"Don't be offended, Stephen," he said. "I should have no objection to drinking with you if I drank at all, but I've signed the pledge."

"None but babies and simpletons sign the pledge," said Stephen, contemptuously.

"If that's the case, you will have to count me either the one or the other."

"Can you change me a ten?" asked Stephen, drawing out a wallet, and producing a ten-dollar bill.

"I haven't so much money with me," answered Paul, rather surprised at Stephen's wealth, for he saw other bills besides in the pocket-book.

"If you had a five now, I'd exchange, and let you give the balance to sister Grace as a present, so that she needn't think brother Stephen quite so bad as she thinks."

Paul did not have a five, having given the one he received from Miss Dearborn to his mother. Even if he had had it with him, he would have felt indisposed to avail himself of his half-brother's surprising generosity, having grievous doubts whether Stephen had come by his present wealth honestly.

"Thank you, Stephen," he said. "I haven't a five, but I thank you all the same for your offer. You must have found profitable employment."

This was said with a rising inflection calculated to call for Stephen's confidence, but the latter evaded the inquiry.

"Yes, I've been lucky," he answered. "I've been speculating."

Again Paul was puzzled. How could Stephen speculate without capital, for it was quite certain that he had none.

"If I only had a five," Stephen said, meditatively, "I'd hand you one for Grace."

"Some other time," said Paul.

"Well, good-night. Tell Grace I wanted to send her something. Tell your mother, too, and she may think better of me. If you won't drink with me, I shall have to drink by myself."

With a hasty nod, Stephen opened the door of the saloon and entered, while Paul resumed his journey home.

"I don't understand it at all," he said to himself. "I never saw Stephen in such a generous mood before. How can he have got hold of all that money? I hope it is honestly come by. I think I had better not tell mother about his offer, or she might relent and invite him to call. We shall do better without him."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CATASTROPHE.

"All the latest magazines and papers! Harper's, Frank Leslie's, the *New York Weekly!*"

Of course the speaker was Paul, and he was making his rounds on the succeeding day in the Milwaukee train.

"Come here, my boy. Let me see what you have got."

The speaker was an elderly gentleman, with gray hair and beard, tall and portly. His handsome suit of the finest broadcloth, the solid gold chain, as thick almost as a cable, that spanned his waistcoat, and his general air, indicated prosperity and wealth.

Paul recognized him as a frequent traveler on his train. He even knew his name, and was aware that he was a substantial Chicago manufacturer, who had a branch establishment at Milwaukee.

The name of Alexander Bradford was well known in business circles, and his name was at any time good at the bank where he dealt for a hundred thousand dollars, while the sum of his wealth was generally estimated at considerably over a million.

"Certainly, Mr. Bradford," answered Paul, politely, as he approached the rich man with alacrity.

"Ha, you know my name," said Mr. Bradford.

"Oh, yes, sir; I have seen you often on the train."

"I can return the compliment, my young friend," said Bradford, smiling, "but I am not familiar with your name."

"My name is not quite so well known as yours, Mr. Bradford. I am Paul Palmer, at your service!"

"Paul Palmer! The name sounds very well, my boy. Some day it may be well known, too. I was not very conspicuous myself at your age. Come, now, how much do you manage to earn in the course of a week?"

"I seldom fall short of seven dollars. Sometimes I get up as high as ten."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"At your age I was earning about half as much as you."

"But you didn't depend on it, sir?"

"Yes, I did. I was a poor boy; had to paddle my own canoe, just as you are doing—had a mother to help, too."

"I have a mother and sister to assist," returned Paul.

"You don't say so?" Mr. Bradford remarked, surveying Paul with increased interest. "Then your father is not living?"

"No, sir."

"I see you are a good boy. Do you give most of your wages to your mother?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you don't think it hard, eh? You don't feel as if you'd rather spend it on yourself, eh?"

"If my mother didn't need it, I should certainly like to spend a little more on myself, but I am glad to feel that I am able to take care of her."

"That's well, my boy; I quite approve of that. By the way—it was you, I believe, who caught the pickpocket that took Miss Dearborn's money?"

"Yes, sir. Were you on the train at the time?"

"Yes; I was in the same car. It did you a great deal of credit. You are evidently sharp."

"Thank you, sir."

"I suppose you don't always expect to be a train boy?"

"I think I shall have to retire by the time I reach fifty, sir; I can't very well pass for a boy then."

"Ho, ho!" laughed the old gentleman, appreciating the joke. "I should say not. And what are you looking to do in place of it?"

"I should like to get a place in a counting-room or

store," said Paul; "but at present I couldn't afford to take such a situation."

"It would lead to more."

"Yes, sir; but I could not expect at first to earn more than half as much as I do on the train. While I have my mother and sister to support, I do not dare to make a change."

"Very true," said the old gentleman, thoughtfully.

Remaining silent, Paul was about to move on, when Mr. Bradford called him back.

"Stay, my young friend," he said; "I haven't made a purchase yet."

He selected an illustrated paper and a magazine, and drew from his vest-pocket a two-dollar bill, which he handed to our hero.

"Ten and thirty-five are forty-five," said Paul, in a business-like tone. "I must give you a dollar and fifty-five cents in change."

"Never mind, Paul," said Mr. Bradford, waving his hand. "Keep it for yourself, or, rather, give it to your mother."

"Thank you, sir," said Paul, gratefully, for the gift was equal to his profits for a good day's work.

He was about to resume his walk through the car when there was a sudden shock.

Passengers were hurled from their seats; there were screams of fright and pain, and a confusion hard to describe.

The train had run off the track!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TRAIN-WRECKER.

What havoc a single minute—nay, a half minute, can make! Here was a train full of passengers, easy in mind, moving at a speed not beyond the average. Not a thought of anxiety or apprehension was in the mind of any. The thought of the pleasant welcome that awaited them at the end of the journey in the great city, not more than ten miles away, warmed the hearts of the travelers, and brought to some faces a contented smile.

Thirty seconds pass, and the train is a wreck—the cars lying on their sides, some of the passengers insensible, some maimed, a few, alas! dead.

And what has brought all this about?

Half a dozen rails, lying beside the track, have been placed on it by some fiend, regardless of the suffering and death he is likely to cause, in order to obtain a chance to plunder the ill-fated passengers. Such men are scoundrels for whom hanging would be too good.

Among those who suffered least was the train boy. He was partially stunned, but almost immediately re-

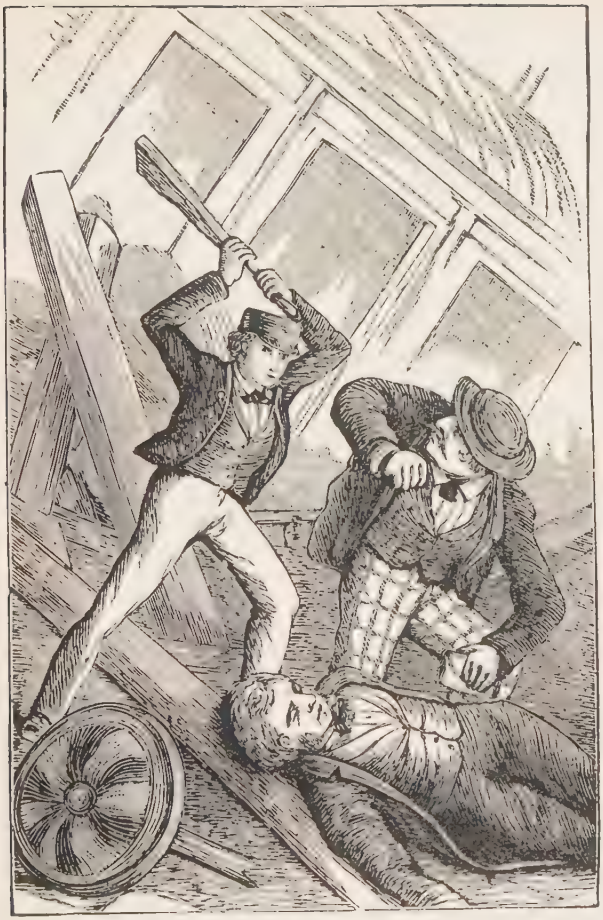
covered his consciousness and his wits. He sprang to his feet and looked around him. The boy, unaccustomed to scenes of suffering, shuddered as he saw the mutilated victims of the latest railway horror. The groans which he heard pierced his heart, and he could scarcely forbear groaning. Here lay a mother and her child, both dead, the child's dead hand closely grasping the hand of the mother who could neither help him nor herself. But I do not propose to harrow up the soul of the reader by an enumeration of the terrible scene. I am chiefly interested in giving an account of what has a bearing upon our hero and his history.

While Paul, scarcely recovered from his bewilderment, was looking about him, his attention was drawn to a sight that stirred his indignation.

Lying upon his back close by was Alexander Bradford, the rich manufacturer. He was breathing heavily, but appeared insensible. Bending over him was an ill-looking man, with an expression of covetous greed, coolly engaged in rifling the pockets of the helpless victim.

It was not a passenger. Paul knew that at a glance, for he had repeatedly gone through the train, and his memory of faces was excellent.

"That man wrecked the train, or had something to do with it," Paul instantly concluded, "and now he is



Paul brought down his club on the man's arm with such force that he howled with pain.

gathering in his harvest. I will take the liberty of interfering with his little game."

He looked about for a weapon, and had not far to look. A piece of wood from the *debris* of the broken train furnished him a convenient club. He did not like to use it till he had given the train-wrecker warning, however.

"Stop your villainous work!" he exclaimed, with honest indignation.

The robber looked up suddenly, but seeing only a boy, recovered his audacity

"Mind your business, boy," he answered. "I know what I'm about."

"So do I," said Paul, resolutely, "and I order you to stop."

"You do, hey? I'll break your head, young man, and pay you well for your impudence."

He had the prostrate manufacturer's pocket-book in his hand as he spoke, and was about transferring it to his pocket, when Paul, perceiving that no time was to be lost, brought down his club on the man's arm with such force that he howled with pain and dropped the pocket-book, exclaiming:

"You've broken my arm, you young vagabond! I'll kill you for that!"

But he was in too great pain to set about it at once.

He began to nurse his injured arm, casting the while black looks of hatred at the intrepid train boy.

Just then Mr. Bradford opened his eyes.

"Where am I?" he asked, in a bewildered voice.

Paul bent over him, and asked, anxiously:

"Are you much hurt, Mr. Bradford?"

"Is it you, my boy. Tell me where I am."

"An accident has happened. The train ran off the track."

"I understand now. It was all so sudden. I was reading, and must have become unconscious."

"Are you hurt? Are any of your limbs broken, sir?" asked Paul, anxiously.

As Paul was bending over Mr. Bradford, the boy saw a quick expression of terror on the rich man's face.

"Look out!" he said, in agitation.

Paul, instinctively guessing that the danger came from the villain he had foiled, sprang aside just in time to avoid a terrible blow which had been aimed at his head by the very club he had himself used. The blow falling on empty air, by its very impetuosity upset the wretch who sought to inflict it, and he tumbled prone over the body of Bradford.

But he had made a serious mistake. The engineer of the train, a man of immense strength, had seen the abortive attempt, and he sprang forward.

When the train-wrecker was attempting to rise, he

found himself seized by the collar by an iron hand. He was jerked to his feet with a power against which he was powerless to contend, and shaken till his bones seemed to rattle.

"What are you trying to do, you rascal?" he exclaimed.

"Stop shaking me, and I will tell you," said the man, sullenly.

"There; now tell me at once," said the engineer, still grasping him firmly, but ceasing to shake him.

"That boy almost broke my arm," said the train-wrecker, with a look of furious malice, "and I mean to get even with him; that's the whole of it."

"No; it isn't quite the whole," said Paul. "What were you doing when I struck you?"

"Taking care of this man."

"Taking care of him!" retorted the train boy, in a tone of sarcasm. "I'll tell you how he was taking care of him, Mr. Barnes; he was rifling his pockets."

"You lie!" said the man, ferociously.

"I tell the truth. You had in your hand Mr. Bradford's wallet, which you had taken from his pocket, and you were about transferring it to your own."

"Ha!" exclaimed the engineer, a sudden light breaking upon him. "Were you a passenger on this train?"

"Yes."

"Did you see him, Paul, in your rounds?" asked the official.

"No. I am sure he was not on the train."

"The boy lies! As if he could remember all the passengers!"

"Here is a man that will remember," said Paul, as the conductor came up. "Mr. Bingham, was this man a passenger?"

The conductor scanned the face of the wrecker, and promptly answered:

"No. If I had collected fare from him I should have remembered him."

"I believe this is the man that wrecked the train," said the engineer.

"It's a base lie!" exclaimed the train-wrecker, growing pale, as he saw his crime brought home to him. "You are all in a conspiracy against me."

As two other passengers came up, the engineer asked:

"Is there any one here that remembers seeing this man?"

"I do," said a plain, farmer-looking man, who had just come up.

"You were not on the train yourself," said the conductor, suspiciously, thinking it was one of the wrecker's confederates.

"Of course I wasn't," was the prompt reply. "I

was forty rods away, in yonder field. I saw this man placing the rails on the track, just before the train came along; and surmising mischief, I hurried to the road to see if I could signal the train and save it. But I came too late. The scoundrel had done his work."

The brawny engineer, at this confirmation of his suspicions, shook the hapless wrecker as if he would shake him to pieces, and was about to order him bound, when a shot from some unknown quarter penetrated the forehead of the villain, and with a half-uttered cry he fell to the earth.

Who fired the fatal shot was never discovered, but only two rods away stood a tall man, rough in aspect, who looked like a Western hunter. He stood motionless and impassive, but it was generally supposed that it was he who dealt swift retribution to the fiend whose success only brought him death. It was felt that his fate was deserved, and no troublesome inquiries were made. No one could pity the wretch who died amid the ruin he had wrought.

CHAPTER XXV.

PAUL CHANGES HIS BUSINESS.

The shooting of the train-wrecker for the moment diverted notice from the victims of the catastrophe; but their condition speedily recalled the attention of those who were unhurt.

Paul once more bent over Mr. Bradford, and repeated his inquiry:

"Are you much hurt, Mr. Bradford?"

"I can't tell you. I will try to get up, if you will help me."

With some difficulty, for the manufacturer was a heavy man, Paul raised him to a sitting position.

"Oh, my arm!" cried Mr. Bradford, wincing.

Paul noticed that his left arm hung helpless at his side.

"I must have broken my arm," he said; "I can't raise it."

"I am very sorry," said Paul, his voice showing that he was sincere.

"It is not a time for regret, since I have escaped a more serious peril. I feel that I am fortunate in com-

parison with some of these poor people. Never mind me, Paul; go and see whom you can help."

Paul did as he was directed, and rendered effectual assistance. I am sure my readers will not wish me to go into details, but prefer that I should confine myself to what has direct bearing upon Paul and his fortunes.

When Paul found time he came again to Mr. Bradford's side.

"Paul," he said, "have you heard whether a train has been sent for to carry us to the city?"

"Yes, Mr. Bradford. One will be here in half an hour."

"I am afraid of taking cold in my arm. Is there a house near by?"

The farmer already introduced overheard the question, and said:

"Yes, sir, my house is near at hand."

"My good friend," said the manufacturer, "can you arrange to keep me over night? I fear I may take cold here, and my arm is already feeling stiff. Of course I will see you compensated for your trouble."

"Whether you do or not, you are welcome to stay at my house."

"Paul, I want you to stay with me if you will," said Mr. Bradford. "We will telegraph to both of

our families that we are safe, so that the news of the accident need not terrify them."

"Yes, sir, I shall be glad to stay with you, if I can let mother know that no harm has befallen me."

"Is there a telegraph office near?"

"At the next station, only a quarter of a mile distant."

"Then after you have seen about my removal, will you telegraph for me?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Have you money with you?"

"Yes, sir, plenty for that purpose."

"Very well. Keep an account of what you spend, and I will repay you. Charge me with the expense of both telegrams."

"Thank you, sir."

Paul attended to his errand, and in half an hour Mrs. Palmer received the following message:

"An accident has happened, but I am safe. I shall not return to-night. Am taking care of a gentleman who is hurt.

"PAUL."

Fortunately this was the first intelligence Paul's mother received of the railroad disaster, so that she had no time to feel frightened. Had she heard the boys crying the extra containing an account of the accident, she would have been in terrible suspense.

"Heaven be thanked," she ejaculated, devoutly, "that my boy has been preserved!"

She sent out Grace to buy an extra as soon as it appeared, and shuddered as she read the terrible details.

Stephen, too, read the paper, but he could not tell whether Paul was hurt, for no list of names was as yet transmitted.

"Why, that's Paul's train!" he soliloquized. "Ten to one he's killed or wounded. I don't want him killed, but if he's only broken a limb, it may teach him a lesson."

What the lesson was, Stephen did not specify, and it might have been hard to say why his young brother needed a lesson, unless it had been criminal in him to work diligently to support his mother and sister. He had declined to contribute to the support of an able-bodied brother, and my readers may be inclined to think with me that he was quite justified in that.

Stephen bought a later edition of the paper, and eagerly scanned the list of casualties.

"I don't see his name," he muttered. "Well, he always was lucky, while I had all the bad luck. Humph! things don't seem to be distributed very equally in this world. However, I'm getting along pretty well now," Stephen concluded, complacently.

Meanwhile Paul, as well as Mr. Bradford, was installed in the best bedroom at the farm-house. A local doctor set the arm, and Paul lay on a lounge, ready to answer any calls. He was prompt and attentive, and Mr. Bradford congratulated himself on having secured so attentive a nurse.

"Paul," said Mr. Bradford the next morning, "you have been of great service to me."

"I am glad I have been able to, sir," answered Paul.

"You are a good boy."

"Thank you, sir."

"How much did you tell me you earned on the train?"

"Seldom less than seven dollars. One week I made as high as ten."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"That is very good pay for a boy of your age."

"Yes, sir; I don't know any other employment that would give me as much."

"But of course you must give it up sooner or later."

"I thought of that, sir."

"Will you be sorry?"

"Only because when I take a position elsewhere I must make up my mind to earn considerably less, and

I can't see my way clear to do it while my mother and sister are so dependent upon me."

"I suppose you know that I am a rich man?"

"Yes, sir, I have always heard so," answered Paul, not quite understanding why Mr. Bradford should say it.

"I have always held that a rich man owes a debt to the world, and should try to liquidate it by doing all the good in his power."

"I am afraid all rich men don't feel so," said Paul.

"No; riches are apt to harden the heart, while they should soften it. I am glad to think that there are many who feel with me. But to return to your prospects. I infer that if you were offered a position paying you as well as this train service you would accept it. Am I right?"

"Yes, sir."

"How much do you make on an average?"

"Daily or weekly, sir?"

"Weekly."

Paul considered a moment, and answered:

"Eight dollars."

"Very good; then I will give you a chance to better yourself. I will take you into my employ, dating from yesterday."

"And give me eight dollars a week?" asked Paul, eagerly.

"Ten dollars. I want you to better yourself, you know."

"You are very kind, sir," said Paul, gratefully, "but I am afraid I can't earn as much as that."

"Possibly not. Few boys of your age are worth as much. But you rendered me yesterday a great service. You saved me from robbery. How much now do you think my wallet contained?"

"A hundred dollars," guessed Paul, to whom that seemed a considerable sum for a man to carry about.

"Over two thousand!" answered Mr. Bradford, quietly.

Paul's face showed the amazement he felt.

"Isn't it imprudent to carry round so much?" he suggested.

"I had the amount paid me in Milwaukee, in bills, and had no resource but to take it in that form. But for you that wretch would have got off safely with it. You see, therefore, that you have saved me more than enough to pay your wages for two years, even on the liberal scale I suggest."

"I was very fortunate to fall in with you, Mr. Bradford. It has given me the opening I have wanted for a long time."

"I hope it may prove fortunate for both of us. Consider yourself, then, already in my employ. After breakfast I shall send you to Chicago for my own physician, under whose care I hope myself to go thither this afternoon."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. BRADFORD'S OFFICE.

Mr. Bradford was removed to Chicago in the afternoon, and at his luxurious house was considerably better off than in the farmer's best chamber.

He had to keep his room for three or four weeks, but the fracture was not a serious one, and though confined to the house he was on the whole very comfortable for a sick man. His sickness did not interfere with, nor delay the carrying out of his promise to Paul. He arranged to have the train boy enter his service immediately, and to that end, on the morning after his removal, dispatched Paul to his counting-house with a verbal message to his book-keeper that Paul was to be employed there.

"It happens," he said to Paul, "that I have really a vacancy for a boy. The one I have hitherto employed, and who is in fact still in my employ, is to prepare for college in accordance with the wishes of a wealthy uncle, who has offered to defray his expenses, and it is understood that I will release him as soon as I can suit myself with another boy.

"That is lucky for me," said Paul.

"Yes, things happen favorably for you."

"I hope I shall be able to perform my duties to your satisfaction," said Paul.

"I do not doubt it. There is nothing very difficult, and John (the present boy) can in a single day give you all the information you need. By the by, Mr. Manson, the book-keeper, will be somewhat disappointed, as he wanted the place for his nephew."

"I don't like to stand in the way of any other boy," said Paul, considerately.

"You will not. This nephew—Julius Clay—I happen to know is an unreliable boy, who is disobedient at home, and would not give me satisfaction. In any event I wouldn't take him."

"Won't Mr. Manson be prejudiced against me?" asked Paul.

"He has no right to be. I am under no obligations to employ a boy I have no confidence in, however nearly related he may be to Mr. Manson. In any event I shall be your friend, and I am inclined to think that will be sufficient to save you from annoyance."

Nevertheless Paul, who had some knowledge of human nature, felt sorry that his entrance at the office was likely to prove disagreeable to a man occupying so important a position as the book-keeper.

"However, Mr. Bradford is my friend," he said to himself, "and I won't trouble myself."

Mr. Manson had, of course, heard of his employer's narrow escape from death, and he had gone up to congratulate him, but had not actually seen him, Mr. Bradford at the time being asleep. He knew nothing of the details of the casualty, except what he had read in the daily papers, and was quite ignorant of Paul's existence even. He therefore had no warning of the engagement which was to bring disappointment to him and his nephew.

About ten o'clock in the morning—for Paul had previously called by appointment at Mr. Bradford's house—our hero entered that gentleman's counting-room.

Sitting on a high stool was a tall, thin, sallow-complexioned man, who looked to be rather over thirty years of age.

This was Emanuel Manson, the book-keeper.

To do him justice it must be admitted that Mr. Manson was an excellent book-keeper. He understood his business thoroughly, and was rapid and accurate. Personally Mr. Bradford had never liked him, but he appreciated his abilities, and did not allow personal feeling to interfere with retaining him.

"Business is business, and friendship is friendship," the manufacturer said to himself. "There is many a

man whom I would like better, who yet might prove very inefficient in my business. I should be foolish to discharge Manson."

So Mr. Manson was likely to retain his place so long as he did not offend his employer in any inexcusable way. Mr. Bradford was a mild man, but when he was roused he could act with decision.

Mr. Manson turned on his stool as Paul entered.

"Well, boy, what do you want?" he asked, in a manner that could not be considered affable.

"Is this Mr. Manson?" asked Paul, removing his hat.

"Yes. Why?" demanded the book-keeper, curtly.

"I come from Mr. Bradford," said our hero.

"Well, deliver your message, and don't take up my time unnecessarily."

Paul felt that he should dislike him, but answered, politely:

"He has engaged me as office-boy."

"Engaged *you!*" exclaimed the book-keeper, frowning. "Who are you?"

It was hard to answer politely, but Paul did.

"My name is Paul Palmer," he said, composedly.

"And where did you fall in with Mr. Bradford, pray?"

Paul felt that the book-keeper had no business to ask these questions, but he resolved that, so far as he

was concerned, there should be nothing to complain of, and he responded in the same tone as before:

"On the train."

"And what were you doing on the train, if I may inquire?"

"Selling papers and magazines."

"Oh! a train boy!"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you ever been in a position before?"

"Not in an office."

"What under heaven could induce Mr. Bradford to engage you?" asked the book-keeper, irritably.

"I must refer you to Mr. Bradford himself," answered Paul, with dignity.

"I shall certainly speak to Mr. Bradford on the subject," said Mr. Manson, significantly. "I am inclined to think there is some mistake. We have a boy already."

"Mr. Bradford told me he wished to leave, and that in a day he would initiate me into my duties."

"Mr. Bradford has about the same as engaged another boy," said the book-keeper, with increasing irritability. "He must have forgotten it."

"I shall be ready to make way for him whenever Mr. Bradford says the word," said Paul, quietly.

Manson was surprised and displeased to find Paul so calm. It was easy to see that he was not a boy who

would allow himself to be bullied or trodden upon. Mr. Manson already hated him for that. He was a natural tyrant, and liked to see boys quail under his displeasure. The present boy was a mild, good-natured boy, whom he could easily make nervous. Indeed, John Graves was a boy more fond of study than business, and he hailed the termination of his engagement with the more pleasure, because Mr. Manson found so much fault, and gave him so much discomfort.

At that moment John entered. He naturally looked inquiringly at Paul, but he addressed himself to the book-keeper.

"Here is the mail, Mr. Manson," he said.

"Why weren't you gone a week for it?" snarled the book-keeper.

"I went as fast as I could, sir," said John, troubled.

"Didn't you stop to play on the way?"

"No, sir."

"Humph! When I was a boy I could do twice as much in a given time as you. Here is a boy who has been sent to take your place—*for the present.*"

These last words were pronounced with an emphasis which Paul understood, though John did not. He only heard what he considered to be the intelligence of his own release.

"Then can I go?" he asked, eagerly.

"No; you are to remain through the day to instruct this new boy in his duties.

"All right."

"Go to the bank with these checks, and you, whatever your name is, can go with him."

When the two boys were in the street, John asked, pleasantly:

"What *is* your name?"

"Paul Palmer. And yours?"

"John Graves. So you are going to be my successor?"

"Yes; I hope you are not sorry to go?"

"Oh, I am delighted. Now I can go to school, and get away from old Manson. But I suppose I ought not to say anything against him to you."

"I have had a little specimen of his manners. He doesn't seem to like my coming into the office."

"No; he wanted the place for his nephew, Julius Clay."

"Do you know Julius?"

"Yes; he's just such another as his uncle in temper, but not in ability. Mr. Manson is an excellent book-keeper, but Julius would make a poor office-boy. Do you think you can stand the book-keeper's temper?"

"I will get along with him as well as I can," answered Paul. "Mr. Bradford is my friend."

"That is good; but you'll hate old Manson before the end of a week."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SERVING A TYRANT.

If Paul was prejudiced against the book-keeper thus early, Mr. Manson was not prepossessed in his favor. He would have been prejudiced against any boy who was selected to fill the place he designed for his nephew, but besides this there was an indefinable something in Paul's air and manner that led him to anticipate difficulty in maintaining his authority.

"I shall have trouble with that boy, I'm thinking," he said to himself, with a vicious stab of the pen in the unoffending paper before him. "Well, that will be bad for him, I reckon. He looks like a mighty independent young vagabond. I shall have to take him in training."

The duties of Paul's new place were not difficult to learn. He didn't need to be shown the way to the post-office, or bank, and he was as well acquainted with the streets and localities of Chicago as any boy had occasion to be.

So when the day was over, he bade a friendly good-night to John Graves with the remark:

"I guess I can get along by myself now, John, but I hope to see you sometimes."

"Good-night, Paul. I hope you will get along with the book-keeper."

"I will try to," answered Paul. "That is, I will do all I can reasonably be expected to, but I shall not allow him to run over me."

"He'll make the attempt, you may be sure of that."

"By the way, John, do you mind telling me how much pay you have received—how much a week, I mean?"

"Four dollars a week for the first six months. Then I was promoted to five, though the book-keeper tried hard to prevent it."

"If you had been his nephew it would have been different."

"Oh, he would have given Julius five dollars, perhaps six, to start with."

"Very likely.

Paul was glad John did not ask him how much he was to receive, as it would have been difficult to explain why he should be so favored. In fact, John supposed no bargain had been made, and that Paul had questioned him in order to ascertain what he was himself likely to be paid.

Paul presented himself the next morning at the

office at the usual hour, which he had been told was eight o'clock.

"Good-morning, sir!" he said to the book-keeper, who had just arrived.

"Humph, you're late!" said Manson, sourly.

Just then a public clock struck eight, and the strokes were audible to both.

"Not by that clock, Mr. Manson," said Paul, significantly.

"Humph! that clock's always slow."

Paul did not think it necessary to answer.

"Well, go to work! Don't stand idling there!" said Manson, sharply.

"Yes, sir, if you will let me know what to do," said Paul, not in the least nervous.

"Dust off my desk, and be quick about it."

Paul did as he was directed.

"Now go to the post-office. Wait, here is the key to our box."

Paul went and returned immediately, making unusually good time, but it is easy for an unreasonable man to find fault, if he has fully made up his mind to do so.

"What made you so long?" demanded the book-keeper, irascibly.

Paul was provoked, and had no hesitation in showing his sense of the book-keeper's unreasonableness.

"Because I haven't wings, or seven league boots," he answered, coolly.

"How do you dare speak thus to me?" demanded Manson, in a rage.

"Because, sir, neither you nor any one else can make better time without running."

As Paul said this, he looked Mr. Manson in the eye, and Manson saw that the boy did not mean to be imposed upon. But he did not propose to relinquish his habit of finding fault readily.

"That's gammon!" he said; "I know what boys are like. They all waste time."

"I don't," answered Paul, briefly.

"Don't be impudent."

"Then, sir, don't be unreasonable."

"I have a good mind to discharge you on the spot," said the book-keeper.

"As you please, sir. If Mr. Bradford sustains you, I shall make no request to remain."

Manson felt that he had not come out of the controversy best. Paul exhibited a coolness and composure that surprised and annoyed him.

"He won't stay here long, if I can help it," he said to himself. "Why, he actually defies me."

Nevertheless, Paul's quiet resolution made him more wary in his dealings with Paul, as he did not like to run the risk of defeat.

"You can take this note to Mr. Bradford," he said, an hour later.

He would have preferred to send some one else, for he did not care that Paul should have an opportunity of getting into the good graces of his employer; but he had no choice. This was the boy's duty, and no one else could be spared.

The note related to business on which Mr. Bradford would expect to be consulted.

"Take that," he said, "and come back some time to-day."

"I shall come back as soon as Mr. Bradford releases me."

"Take care you do."

All this was very annoying, and, indeed, insulting, but Paul was judicious, and, while resisting aggression and injustice, knew that he could not make Mr. Manson civil or polite.

Arrived at the house of Mr. Bradford, Paul was shown into the presence of the manufacturer.

"Good-morning, Paul!" said Mr. Bradford, pleasantly.

"Good-morning, sir. I have come with a note from Mr. Manson."

Mr. Bradford took it and read it quickly. He took out a pencil and wrote at the bottom a couple of lines.

"That is my answer," he said, returning it to Paul.

"How do you like Mr. Manson?" asked the manufacturer.

"Not very well, sir."

"I suppose he does not appear to like you?"

"No, sir; it is very clear he does not."

Paul stopped there.

"Have you any complaints to make?" asked Mr. Bradford.

"No, sir; I don't care to say anything; but I would like to ask you a favor."

"What is it, Paul?"

"If Mr. Manson makes any complaints against me, will you give me an opportunity to defend myself?"

"Certainly I will. Do you apprehend that he will complain of you?"

"I am pretty sure he will."

"Why?"

"He seems determined to find fault with me. However, I shall not be the first to complain. I propose to do my duty faithfully, and will bear his scolding as well as I can. If I suit you, sir, I shall be satisfied. I don't expect to suit Mr. Manson."

"Well said, Paul. I won't inquire into your relations with the book-keeper, but if he complains of

you, you may rest assured that I will give you a chance to defend yourself."

"Thank you, sir; that is all I ask."

Paul returned to the office, and when, as he expected, Mr. Manson charged him with loitering on the way, he heard him with a cool contempt, which angered the book-keeper more than spoken words.

"Really, this is the most impertinent boy we ever had in the office. He does not seem to mind me any more than if I was a porter."

Accustomed to have boys quail before him, he was provoked at the coolness with which Paul bore his taunts and reproaches, and he felt all the more resolved either to get him dismissed, or to make him anxious to resign.

Among other things, he was accustomed to employ the office-boy to run on his private errands, though, of course, wholly unauthorized to do so, and he expected to employ Paul in the same manner.

About three o'clock he summoned Paul, and said to him:

"You may go to my room, No. 47 H—— street, and ask my landlady to give you a bundle of dirty clothes, which you will carry to the laundry, No. 18 M—— street."

Paul looked at him in astonishment.

"Are the clothes Mr. Bradford's?" he asked.

"No, you little fool, they are mine."

"Then, sir, I must decline to take them. I am in Mr. Bradford's employ, not yours."

"Do you decline to do as I bid you?" gasped Manson, at white heat.

"Yes, sir. I am not employed to do any such work."

"You'll repent this!" exclaimed the book-keeper, mortified and incensed. "It seems you defy my authority."

"No, sir; I shall do whatever you have a right to demand of me."

"I'll have you out of this office before the end of the week. See if I don't."

Paul walked away, not appearing in the least terrified by this threat.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. MANSON IS SURPRISED.

Emanuel Manson felt too late that he had made a mistake. He had intended to humiliate Paul by making him his own errand boy, but our hero's firm refusal to serve him made the humiliation his own. He did not venture to report the matter to Mr. Bradford, for he knew that he had no right to call upon Paul to do his own errands; yet to let it pass would seem like a confession of weakness.

"I can't do anything at present," he decided, "but I will take the first opportunity to prejudice Mr. Bradford against the young rascal and procure his dismissal."

In other words, Mr. Manson proposed to bide his time. He had no idea of foregoing his vengeance, but thought it politic to defer it. Meanwhile he had plenty of opportunities to make things disagreeable to Paul, and availed himself of them.

At the end of the first week a very disagreeable surprise awaited Mr. Manson.

The time came to pay off the clerks, and among others Paul.

He drew from the cash-box four dollars and handed it to our hero, with the remark:

"There's your pay, though it is more than you have earned."

Paul glanced at the two two-dollar bills which lay in his hand, and said, quietly:

"Why do you pay me four dollars?"

"Three would be enough, but I didn't suppose you would be modest enough to admit it."

"I am not. I suppose Mr. Bradford hasn't told you how much my wages are to be."

"How much?" inquired the book-keeper, with a sneer. "Ten dollars, I presume."

"You are right. I will trouble you to give me six dollars more."

"Are you crazy?" gasped Manson.

"Not that I am aware of," answered Paul, coolly.

"If you are trying to humbug me, you may as well give up the attempt. I wasn't born last year."

"I am neither crazy nor trying to humbug you," said Paul, with easy self-possession. "Mr. Bradford has kindly agreed to pay me ten dollars a week, and——"

"I never heard a more outrageous falsehood!" ejaculated Manson. "The idea of paying a raw, inexperienced boy ten dollars a week! Why, it is utterly

ridiculous. I shall take care to report your attempted swindle to Mr. Bradford."

"Just as you like, Mr. Manson; but first, will you cast your eyes over this note?"

Paul produced a folded sheet of note-paper, and passed it to the book-keeper.

Manson read to his amazement these words over the signature of Alexander Bradford:

"I have fixed the wages of Paul Palmer at ten dollars per week, and you are authorized to pay him that sum."

"Where did you get this paper?" asked Manson.

"From Mr. Bradford."

"When?"

"Yesterday. He thought you would require his authority for paying so large a sum."

"How do I know but you have forged this note?" asked Manson.

"Probably you know Mr. Bradford's handwriting and signature. Besides, it would be foolish in me to attempt a forgery which would immediately be found out."

In fact, Manson knew that the note was genuine. He could not be mistaken in Mr. Bradford's handwriting, but he wanted to find some excuse for delaying or refusing payment. On the whole, he did not venture to do either, as he knew his employer would be offended.

"There's your money," he said, throwing the balance on the desk. "I can't say I understand it at all. I shall feel it necessary to speak to Mr. Bradford on the subject."

"I wish you would, sir, so as to remove any doubts you may have."

"It is about three times as much as you have earned."

"I won't dispute you, sir. I am quite aware that it is more than I can earn."

"Then why did Mr. Bradford pay you so much?"

"Probably he will tell you when you speak to him on the subject."

Manson was baffled, but he felt all the more annoyed that his nephew Julius had lost a situation which carried so much pay with it.

He dispatched Paul on an errand, and during his absence Julius came in.

"Well, Julius," said his uncle, "I have just been paying that boy who has got your place."

"I wish you had been paying me. I haven't got a cent to my name. Four dollars would have come mighty convenient."

"Four dollars!"

"Yes; isn't that what he gets? Three dollars would be too mean."

"The boy gets *ten dollars* a week!"

"Ten dollars!" gasped Julius. "Oh, come now, you're fooling."

"Not at all. Do you see that?"

He showed Julius the note of Mr. Bradford previously referred to.

"Good gracious! I can't believe it!" exclaimed Julius. "Why, it's tremendous pay. Can't you turn him off and get me in his place? What a swell I'd cut on ten dollars a week!"

"I wish you had the place," said Manson, thoughtfully; "but I don't know how to manage it."

"Try to think of some way, Uncle Emanuel," pleaded Julius. "I should have liked it at four, for ma only gives me a dollar a week allowance, and that is hardly enough to buy my cigarettes."

"You'd be a good deal better off if you gave up cigarettes. They are doing you no good."

And here Mr. Manson gave his nephew good advice.

"Put me in the place, and I'll do whatever you want me to," said Julius

"I'll do my part," said the book-keeper.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BOOK-KEEPER'S TRIUMPH.

In less time than was anticipated Mr. Bradford came to the office, his arm being so far well that it no longer gave him any trouble.

The book-keeper did not delay long to open his batteries upon Paul. On the second day, our hero being out, Manson began:

"I would like to say a few words to you, Mr. Bradford, about the new boy."

"About Paul?" asked Mr. Bradford, lifting his eyes from the morning paper.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, proceed."

"I can't say I am satisfied with him, sir."

"Indeed! What is the matter?"

"He is not respectful to me."

"Indeed!"

"I may say he is positively impudent at times."

"That surprises me. He seems to me very unlikely to be guilty of such offenses."

"I dare say; he is very artful. I presume he is very respectful to you. That is policy."

"I should suppose he would consider it politic to be respectful to you also, Mr. Manson."

"All the other boys have, but this boy puts on a great many airs. In fact, he is mighty independent. I suppose it is on account of the extremely high wages he receives."

"Yes, ten dollars is very high pay for a boy of his age," admitted Mr. Bradford.

"Of course he doesn't earn it. He doesn't earn half as much."

"You may be right. I should not be inclined to pay another boy nearly as much."

Mr. Manson was sorry to hear this, as, could he obtain the position for Julius at ten dollars a week, his young nephew had agreed to pay him a commission of two dollars a week, which the book-keeper, being fond of money, was not above accepting.

"Have you any other complaints to make about Paul?" asked Mr. Bradford. "Doesn't he attend to his duties?"

"Fairly well," Manson admitted, reluctantly, the fact being that there had never been a boy in the office so efficient as our hero, the ex-train boy.

"Humph! I am glad to hear that."

"Still it is of course disagreeable to have a boy under me who treats me with insolence."

"Do I understand, then, that you would prefer to have a change?" inquired the manufacturer.

"I don't want to make any trouble, sir," said the book-keeper, who could be polite enough to his employer, "but I should really be glad to have another boy in Paul's place."

"Very well. I have been thinking of making a change myself."

Manson could hardly believe his ears. He had entertained very small hope of effecting his purpose, and Mr. Bradford's ready acquiescence in his wishes filled him with delight.

"If I might venture the suggestion," he added, encouraged by his success, "I should be glad if you would give the place to my nephew Julius."

"I don't know how Julius will suit me," said Mr. Bradford, "but I will try him for a week."

"At ten dollars a week?" suggested Mr. Manson.

"At *four* dollars a week!" replied the manufacturer, with emphasis. "That is all boys of his age usually get. There were special reasons why I paid Paul more."

Manson was disappointed that Julius should be paid only ordinary boys' wages, but still it was a great

triumph to have Paul discharged, and Julius put in his place.

"Now," he said to himself, "I've the whip-hand of the young rascal. I'll pay him off."

"Shall I tell him, sir, when he comes in?" asked the book-keeper.

"No; I propose to tell him myself. Send him in to me when he gets back from his errand."

"Yes, sir, I will," promptly responded the book-keeper, resuming his own work with a satisfied smile.

Ten minutes later Paul came in from the post-office, bringing the afternoon mail.

CHAPTER XXX.

PAUL IS PROMOTED.

"You are to go to Mr. Bradford at once," said Manson, as he received the letters Paul had brought.

There was a triumphant smile on the book-keeper's face which Paul did not fail to observe.

"What does it mean?" he thought. "Has he been complaining of me?"

This would not have troubled him but for Manson's evident satisfaction. It was clear, he thought, that something disagreeable was about to happen during the interview that awaited Paul. However, he did not propose to give his enemy the satisfaction of knowing that he had given him anxiety. He merely said in his usual tone, "Very well, sir," and proceeded to open the door of the inner office.

"Mr. Manson told me you wished to see me, sir," he said.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Bradford, wheeling round in his office chair. "Manson has been making complaints against you."

"I am not surprised at that, sir. From the first,

he appears to have disliked me. May I ask what he says?"

"He says you are not respectful to him."

"I am as respectful as I can be, but he is continually finding fault. It is impossible to please him."

"He wants me to discharge you."

Paul's heart beat quickly. It would be a misfortune to him to leave so good a place, especially as he was not sure whether he could regain his place as train boy, and it would operate against him to have it known that he had been discharged by Mr. Bradford.

"Of course, sir," he answered, soberly, "that is as you please."

"Moreover," the manufacturer proceeded, "he wants me to take his nephew, Julius, in your place."

"I knew he wanted Julius in my place," said Paul, despondently.

"And I have about made up my mind to let him try the experiment."

The blow had fallen! Poor Paul thought it hard, but his pride sustained him. He could not understand, however, how Mr. Bradford could so desert him and side with his enemy, the book-keeper.

"Then, sir, I suppose I am to go," he answered.

"Well, I can hardly employ two boys in the office, since there is not more than work enough for one."

"I am very sorry, sir," said Paul, in a subdued tone. "I have tried to be faithful to you."

"And that is the reason why I intend to promote you," said the manufacturer, smiling.

Promote! The word fell like music on Paul's ears. It was all right. His friend had not deserted him after all.

"Oh, thank you, sir," he said, his face brightening.

"Come now, Paul, you didn't really think I meant to discharge you, did you?"

"It looked like it, sir," said Paul.

"I shouldn't have made you feel so uncomfortable," said his employer. "Now about this change. I am letting Manson have his way only to prove to him how unfit Julius is for the post. He hasn't tried him yet. When he does he will find him idle, lazy, and unreliable, and he will find such fault that his nephew will probably himself resign the place in disgust."

"I don't know," said Paul. "Ten dollars will reconcile him as it did me."

"Oh, bless your soul! Julius isn't to have ten dollars. He is to have four, like all his predecessors except yourself."

On the whole Paul was rather glad of that. It made Mr. Manson's momentary triumph less important.

"Now about your own affairs," said Mr. Bradford. "Are you willing to leave Chicago and travel West?"

"I would like it above all things, sir," said Paul, his eyes sparkling.

"I thought you would. Well, I am about to give you an important commission. Do you know where the Black Hills are situated?"

"Yes, sir; in Wyoming."

"Precisely. Well, I suppose you know that multitudes have flocked there in search of gold."

"Yes, sir."

"I myself own half a mine there. It is known as the Blackstone. A man named Fox, who is resident at the mine, owns the other half, and its working is done under his direction. Now I have a shrewd suspicion that he is cheating me, taking advantage of my absence and probable inability to form any adequate judgment of the mine and its value."

"What makes you think so, sir?"

"His continually writing discouraging accounts of the mine, expressing his great disappointment with it. In his last letter he winds up by saying that he is willing to give or take two thousand dollars for it, though it cost the two of us ten thousand."

"Doesn't he run a risk in making such an offer?"

"Yes, but he thinks I can't attend to it myself, and will sacrifice my interest readily, just to get rid of anxiety."

"I see."

"Now I want you to go out and form a judgment as to the man's motives, and get an idea of the real value of the mine."

"But, sir, I don't know anything about mines."

"Very true. Still you have good common sense, and can institute inquiries without exciting suspicion. No one would suppose I would select as my agent a boy of sixteen."

"Perhaps it is rash," said Paul.

"Nine out of ten would say so, but somehow I have more confidence in you than in many men, and I believe you would serve me faithfully."

"You are right there, sir, at any rate."

"Now as to the compensation. Will twenty-five dollars a week and your traveling expenses content you?"

"Twenty-five dollars!" ejaculated Paul. "Are you in earnest?"

"Quite so. Paul, I don't pay you according to your age, but according to the nature of your work, and twenty-five dollars a week is not too much. Now, when can you start?"

"Day after to-morrow, sir."

"That will do."

"I was thinking how I could arrange about my mother, Mr. Bradford. She will need money while I am gone."

"She can call every Saturday at the office and collect what you thinks she needs. Shall it be ten dollars a week? If so, it can be deducted from your week's wages."

"That will be very satisfactory, sir."

"Very well. Go home, make preparations for setting out, and come to me to-morrow for instructions. Don't tell anybody except your mother where you are going."

"All right sir."

As Paul entered the presence of the book-keeper, the latter glanced at him eagerly to see his downcast looks. He was perplexed to see that Paul seemed in excellent spirits, and feared Mr. Bradford had reconsidered his decision. But Paul reassured him.

"Mr. Manson," he said, "I am about to leave you."

"So Mr. Bradford has found you out, and discharged you," sneered Manson.

"At any rate," answered Paul, "I shall no longer be office-boy. Julius is to take my place."

"If you had been more respectful to me you might have staid," said Manson.

"Mr. Bradford didn't say anything about that," said Paul, smiling. "Well, good-day."

"There's something about this I don't understand,"

thought the perplexed book-keeper. "I thought he would make a fuss. Well, at any rate, I've carried my point. He's bounced, and Julius is in his place."

CHAPTER XXXI.

PAUL AND HIS SUCCESSOR.

About eleven o'clock the next forenoon Paul, after making some necessary arrangements, took his way toward Mr. Bradford's counting-room.

As he turned into State street he encountered Julius, who had already entered upon the duties of his office. Naturally, Julius adopted his uncle's theory, that Paul had given dissatisfaction and been discharged, and, as he bore no good-will to our hero, he was gratified at the thought.

"Hallo!" he called out, not averse to exulting over his predecessor.

"Good-morning, Julius," said Paul, affably.

"I've got your place," said Julius, not attempting to conceal his satisfaction.

"Yes," answered Paul.

"He doesn't seem to mind it," commented Julius to himself. "I suppose he is too proud to show me how he feels."

"What did the old man bounce you for?" asked Julius, rather curious on the subject.

"You must ask him," said Paul, still pleasantly.

"My uncle always told me you wouldn't stay," said Julius.

"Perhaps he got me turned off," suggested Paul.

"I reckon he did. He didn't like you much."

"No; there wasn't much love lost between us."

"Where are you going now?"

"Round to the office."

"What for?"

"To see Mr. Bradford."

"If you want him to take you on again," said Julius, rather uneasily, "you might as well give it up. He won't do it."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Oh, yes," answered Julius, hurriedly; "my uncle wouldn't let him do it."

"I thought Mr. Bradford was boss, not your uncle," Paul ventured to observe.

"He'll let my uncle choose the office-boy, and of course uncle Emanuel prefers me."

"Don't be alarmed, Julius. I won't try to deprive you of your place. Still I want to see Mr. Bradford."

"Oh, I know what you want," said Julius, nodding.

"Suppose you tell me?"

"You want Mr. Bradford to give you a recommendation, so you can get another place."

"You are sharp, Julius," said Paul, laughing.

"It doesn't take much sharpness to see that."

"Where are you going?"

"To the post-office."

"Very well. We may meet in the office. Good-morning."

"I don't understand that boy," said Julius to himself. "Anybody would think he was all right, instead of having lost his place and a salary of ten dollars a week. It's awful mean of the old man to pay me only four. I'm worth as much as Paul any day."

Such was the idea of Julius, and he was by no means singular in thinking well of himself. That is rather common among men as well as boys.

Paul went on his way and soon reached the office.

The book-keeper turned his head as he entered.

When his eyes rested on Paul he frowned.

"*You* back again?" he said.

"I am back again, Mr. Manson," replied Paul, composedly.

"What do you want?" asked Manson, rudely.

"My business is not with you, but with Mr. Bradford," answered Paul, coldly.

"It appears to me you have no business whatever in this office after being discharged," continued Manson.

"It is plain Mr. Bradford doesn't tell you all his affairs," said Paul.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I am still in Mr. Bradford's employ, though not as office-boy."

"Is this true?" asked Manson, in a tone of unpleasant surprise.

"Yes, sir. I am here now by Mr. Bradford's appointment."

The book-keeper's countenance fell. Where now was his triumph? As the post of office-boy was the lowest in the establishment, it was clear Paul had been promoted, and the book-keeper would no longer have the satisfaction of ordering him about or giving him annoyance.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JIM SCOTT.

By advice of Mr. Bradford, Paul selected the Chicago, Rock Island, Pacific route to Omaha, where he took passage on the Union Pacific road as far as Cheyenne, in the southern part of Wyoming, known as the "Magic City of the Plains." He was very much interested in what he saw from the car windows as he rolled over the prairies of Illinois and the fertile plains of Iowa. He gazed eagerly at the Mississippi River, of which he had heard so much, and was somewhat disappointed to find it so narrow at the point of crossing.

On again from Omaha, five hundred miles and over, till the train halted at Cheyenne, and he got out at the station.

As he stood on the platform, while the train went on, he was accosted by a roughly dressed man, who might be a miner to judge from his slouch hat, his loose-fitting clothes, and his long and rather ragged-looking beard, which seemed a stranger both to razor and scissors.

"Goin' to stop here, young man?"

"I shall stop over to-night, I think," answered Paul.

"And to-morrow I reckon you go to the Hills?"

"That is my intention," said Paul, guardedly.

"I don't know but I'll go there myself, though I did calculate to stay here, or hereabouts, for a time."

"Have you ever been to the mines?" asked Paul.

"Have I ever been there? Well, I should smile," answered the stranger, expectorating profusely. "Why, I own a hotel in Custer City. I left my cousin in charge, while I made a run down here to learn the fashions."

This he said with a grim smile, and a glance at his rough attire

"Have you found them?" asked Paul.

"Well, I haven't followed 'em. Where might you be from, youngster?"

"From Chicago."

"I was there once, long ago, but I drifted on to California, and lived there up among the mountains for seven or eight years. Somehow I didn't get rich. But, one day, I heard of the Black Hills, and dusted for 'em."

"I hope good luck came to you there," said Paul, politely.

"You bet it did. Why, youngster, rough as I look,

I consider myself worth to-day from fifty to a hundred thousand dollars."

Paul looked at his new acquaintance with respect as a successful man.

"That is a good deal of money," he said.

"So it is. Sometimes I wake up and forget that I'm rich. Seems to me I'm the same shiftless vagabond that lived for years among the California mountains, but there's a heap of satisfaction in findin' I'm mistaken."

"So I should think."

"And what's more, I don't mean to gamble away my pile, as most miners do. I'm gettin' on in life, and I can't afford it."

"That is where you are sensible," said Paul.

"And now, youngster, if I may be so bold, what's your name?"

"Paul Palmer."

"That sounds like a story name."

"But it's my real name, for all that."

"Do you expect to make your fortune out there?"

"I don't know. I hope to find something to do."

"You're pretty young to be travelin' alone."

"Yes; I am only sixteen."

"Have you got money enough to keep you along till you get something to do?"

"I think I can get along."

"If you get into any trouble, just call on Jim Scott —that's me—and I'll see you through."

"Mr. Scott, I am very much obliged to you for such a kind offer to a stranger."

"*Mr.* Scott? Oh, you mean me! I'd rather you'd call me Jim—it comes more natural."

"Then I say, thank you, Jim," said Paul, offering his hand.

"That's all right," said Mr. Scott, in a tone of satisfaction. "Now come round to the hotel, and I'll put you up to a wrinkle or two, and we'll talk over our trip to Custer City."

"Then you are going, too?"

"Yes, if you don't mind my company."

"I shall be glad to have the benefit of your experience."

Paul knew that it behooved him to avoid sudden acquaintanceships, but there was something in Mr. Scott's manner, rough as his appearance was, that inspired confidence.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHEYENNE.

Paul looked about him with eager curiosity, for he had all a youth's keen zest in visiting unknown places. He saw one long street, of unusual width, lined with an indiscriminate variety of buildings from one-story saloons and offices to two and three-story buildings.

The Inter-Ocean Hotel, in front of which his guide halted, was a fine brick structure of three stories, which seemed hardly at home in the loosely built town, which had sprung up as if by magic on the prairies.

"This is where I put up," said Mr. Scott.

"I'll take a room here, if they can give me one."

"I'll see that you have one. They know me—Jim Scott—and they'd make room if they hadn't one. Do you know what they used to call this settlement?"

"No."

"'Hell on Wheels' was the name they give it in early days."

"Was that to invite settlers?" asked Paul, laughing.

"I expect it was because it was about the roughest,

most lawless place between Omaha and Frisco. Why the principal occupation of the first settlers was gamblin', drinkin' rot-gut whisky, and shootin'. There wasn't a day passed hardly but some chap was found lyin' in the street with a hole in his head or a bullet in his heart. I tell you them was rough times."

"I hope things have changed," said Paul, by no means prepossessed in favor of Cheyenne by what he had heard. "If they haven't, I don't think I shall stay here long."

"Oh, yes, it's settled down, so that life is pretty safe. They had to raise a vigilance committee to set things straight like they did in Frisco. It's all right now."

"I am glad to hear it."

Meanwhile they had entered the hotel, and Paul succeeded in securing a room adjoining that of Mr. Scott, or Jim Scott, as he insisted on being called.

After he had washed and changed his clothing, he sat down to a substantial meal, which he enjoyed with the hearty appetite of youth. Then Mr. Scott invited him to take a walk about the town.

"I say, youngster, have you got a father and mother?"

"My father is dead, but I have a mother and sister living."

"And what did your mother say to your comin' out here?"

"She was willing, knowing that I had my own way to make."

"I haven't chick or child myself. I had a wife once, but she died twenty years ago. Now I've got money, but sometimes I feel lonely."

"It isn't too late for you to marry again, Mr. Scott."

"Mr. Scott?"

"I mean Jim."

"Maybe you're right, but there ain't many women would hitch on to me except for my money, and I'm better without such. I say, youngster, do you mind my keepin' company with you while you stay in these parts?"

"Certainly not, Jim. I shall feel fortunate in having one with me who knows so much more about the country than I."

"That's all right, then. When do you want to start for Custer City?"

"To-morrow, if there is a chance."

"Then I'll get ready, too."

"What is the distance?"

"Two hundred and fifty miles, and pretty long miles, some of 'em."

"Do we travel by stage?"

"Yes. One has been put on lately. When I went first, I traveled by wagon, and was a week on the road, maybe ten days. Now, if you travel at night, we can reach Custer City in forty-eight hours or thereabouts."

"I suppose the road is a lonely one?"

"You may say that. As far as Fort Laramie it is pretty well settled. There is a ranch about every twelve miles."

"Do you call that well settled?"

"Well," said Jim, "we call it so out here."

"I shouldn't think people would feel crowded, living at such distances."

"We like plenty of room, you see, Paul."

The next morning Paul and his new friend started for Custer City, and in due time arrived at the Black Hills metropolis without any adventures that need recording.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MAJOR ASHTON IN A QUANDARY.

We must now leave our hero for a time and return to Chicago, to look after some of the other characters whom we have introduced in our story.

Major Ashton, after a late breakfast, sat in a handsome apartment, with several letters before him. These he had examined without much apparent satisfaction. Finally he threw down the last with a gesture of impatience.

"They all sing the same tune," he said, irritably. "They are all poor trades-people, who want money. Here's my tailor, who ventures to hope I will call round and settle his little bill—two hundred and seventeen dollars!—as he is in great want of money. What business has the rascal to want money? I dare say he has a plentiful bank account, made by fleecing customers like myself. Then there's Jones, the bootmaker, wants me to pay up his bill of sixty-five dollars for boots and shoes. I can't remember having all the things he charges for. I dare say the rogue has charged

for what I never had. Then here's my landlady has left on my table a bill for the last two months' board, at the rate of thirty-five dollars a week. Really, it looks as if all my creditors had combined to annoy me on this particular evening.

"The worst of it is," continued the major, after a slight pause, "I don't see any way out of the difficulty. I haven't even money enough to pay my way in a cheap boarding-house. If I should descend to such degradation, farewell to all my social position. Managing mammas would no more angle for me, and even Miss Framley would turn up her plebeian pug nose at me, though it would seem as if nature had saved her the necessity. At present she is trying in desperate earnest to catch me."

The major was not misled by vanity. Miss Framley knew very well that the major was regarded as a great catch, and that a match with him would give her a distinguished position in society. Moreover, she was under the mistaken impression that he was wealthy. The mistake was a natural one. The major was always arrayed with irreproachable elegance, wore expensive jewelry, was known to live handsomely, and indeed to possess all the outward marks of prosperity. She would gladly have embraced the opportunity to become Mrs. Major Ashton.

At one time the major thought of giving her the

opportunity. He knew that Framley *pere* was rich, and that Miss Framley had fifty thousand dollars in her own right. How far this money would be at the command of her husband was an important question.

Miss Framley forever spoiled her chances one day, when she incautiously expressed the determination to have her fortune settled on herself. She was not speaking to the major, but he overheard her.

"Forewarned is forearmed," he said to himself. "Miss Framley is a pill which must be sugar-coated to be taken, or, as I may say, well gilded. If the girl expects to make a good match on the score of her own personal attractions, she makes an egregious mistake. No, young lady, I must have your money paid over, or secured to me on the wedding-day, or your name can never be Mrs. Ashton."

Of course, while there seemed a chance of securing Grace Dearborn, the major never gave a thought to Miss Framley, but Grace's manner at the ball convinced him that to cherish further hopes in that quarter would be a mere waste of time. He could never hope to marry her, except against her will, and was compelled to leave her out of the account. For Grace, it must be owned, he cherished as warm an affection as he was capable of feeling for any one, and he would have married her even with the proviso that all her wealth should be settled on herself. He was,

at all events, a man of taste, and he understood very well the difference between Grace and Miss Framley.

His affairs now had reached a point when it seemed necessary to take some step to relieve himself from the claims of creditors, who were daily becoming more clamorous. In his perplexity, one door of relief seemed to open to him. His brow cleared, he brought down his hand upon the table, and exclaimed:

"Now I see my way clear. It won't be so great a sacrifice after all. If I can't be Grace's husband, I will be her uncle."

CHAPTER XXXV.

WOOING THE WIDOW.

Mrs. Sheldon was sitting in her morning-room when a servant appeared and announced that Major Ashton was in the parlor.

"Major Ashton!" repeated the widow. "Did you tell him Miss Grace was out?"

"Yes'm; but he said it was of no consequence; he wanted to see you."

"I suppose he wants to inquire about his chances with Grace," thought Mrs. Sheldon. "I am sorry I can't give him any encouragement. I never knew Grace more prejudiced against a man than she is against the major. Tell him I will come down at once." This last to the servant.

Major Ashton, as already foreshadowed, had changed his plan of campaign—or, rather, he had changed the object of his campaign. Knowing that he could not secure the niece, he had come to lay siege to the aunt. He felt fortunate in having hit a time when Miss Dearborn was out.

It was rather a delicate matter to make such a sud-

den change, and required a good deal of tact; but Major Ashton had considerable confidence in his ability to make the transfer without exciting suspicion. He looked about the room in which he was seated, and surveyed with satisfaction the signs everywhere of opulence in the owner.

"What matter if the widow is fifteen years my senior?" he said to himself. "I am not going to marry her out of sentiment, but for solid pecuniary reasons. The older she is, the more chance there is of her leaving me my freedom with her fortune before I am an old man."

His reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Sheldon, who advanced to meet him with a gracious smile.

"I am glad to see you, major," she said.

"Thank you, Mrs. Sheldon," he replied, in a tone and with an *empressement* new to him and to her.

"Poor fellow! he is in trouble," she thought, not suspecting his change of front. "He wants my assistance."

"Grace is not at home," she said, supposing this information would interest him.

"Indeed!" he returned, with languid indifference. "Out shopping, I suppose?"

"Really, major, you don't show much interest in

the subject. But then that's the way with you men. You are all of you fickle and faithless."

"No, Mrs. Sheldon; you do me injustice—I am the soul of fidelity. But you know as well as I do that Miss Dearborn will have nothing to say to me."

"'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady,' major."

"I will answer in the old couplet:

> "'If she be not fair to me,
> What care I how fair she be?'"

"Does that mean that you have quite abandoned the field?" asked Mrs. Sheldon, in some surprise.

"So far as Miss Dearborn is concerned—yes."

"And you don't consider yourself fickle?"

"No. The fact is, my dear Mrs. Sheldon, I can't go on loving one who doesn't care a rap for me. I could have loved your niece to the end of my life if she had reciprocated my affection; but as she does not, I shall quietly resign her."

"You are sure you won't break your heart, major?" said the widow, laughing.

"Do I look like it?"

"Well, no; I can't say you do."

"I have not even sworn never to marry," continued Major Ashton.

"Perhaps you have already made a second choice?"

"I have."

"And you have come to tell me of it? How delightful!"

"I wish I could be sure you would say that after hearing the name of that choice."

"Perhaps I may. Who is it?"

"Now for it!" thought the major. "Now to test the value of soft sawder!"

He drew his chair nearer that of Mrs. Sheldon, and began to speak.

"In paying my attention to Miss Dearborn," he said, "I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the attractive qualities of another. I was not conscious of the interest which that other excited in me till my heart, thrown back upon itself in its loneliness, sought another object for its affection. Do you understand?"

"I don't think I do," murmured Mrs. Sheldon. "Please be more explicit."

"I will. Mrs. Sheldon, I am a man of few words, and you may think me abrupt. Will you deign to accept that which your niece has rejected? Will you be my wife?"

Mrs. Sheldon had not dreamed of marrying again, but she was a woman, and accessible to flattery. She admired the major; she knew that he was considered a catch, and though she did not love him, she reflected with exultation that it would be a great triumph

for her to carry off the prize for which so many had sought.

"You surprise me very much, Major Ashton," she said. "I did not dream of this."

"But it is not disagreeable to you, let me hope?"

"I am of course flattered by your preference, but I am as old as the hills. Are you aware, Major Ashton, that I shall soon be forty-one?"

"She's fifty-one if she's a day!" thought the enamored lover; and he was right.

"You are at the meridian of your beauty, dear Mrs. Sheldon," he said, taking her unresisting hand

"I am older than you."

"No much. I am thirty-eight."

He was really thirty-five.

"There are but three years between us," he resumed. "Shall three years separate us?"

"You do not look thirty-eight."

"Nor you forty-one," returned Major Ashton.

"Heaven forgive me for the lie!" he said, *sotto voce.*

"What would Grace—what would the world say?" asked the widow, coyly.

"Why need we care what either will say? Possibly Miss Dearborn may regret her decision, but it will be too late. I would not resign you now for her."

"Are you sincere in this, major?" asked Mrs. Sheldon, with gratified vanity.

"Shall I swear it, my dear one?"

"No; I will believe you, though it seems strange to me that you should prefer me to one so young and fair."

"At my age, dear Mrs. Sheldon, a man wants a home presided over by a fond and faithful wife, who will not have her head turned by the frivolities of fashion, but will live for her husband. I do not think I am mistaken in thinking that you will make me such a wife."

"I hope I may, dear major."

"Then you grant my suit?"

"Can you not give me a week?" asked the widow, thinking it best not to grasp at the offer too eagerly.

"I could, but I would rather not. Can you not end my suspense to-day? We have no one to consult. We can decide for ourselves. Why need we delay?"

"Well, major, if you insist upon it, I must say yes," said the widow, "though I fear we are both acting foolishly."

"I am not, at any rate," said the major; and he was doubtless right, for the object of his devotion was worth at least a quarter of a million, while he was harassed by creditors whom he could not satisfy.

Of what followed it is needless to speak. Half an hour later Major Ashton left the house, successful and

complacent. Henceforth he would find his path clear. He had only to whisper the secret of his engagement to appease even his most troublesome creditors. The husband of the wealthy Mrs. Sheldon would be quite a different person from the impecunious Major Ashton.

When Grace Dearborn returned, she found a new look on her aunt's face—a look of mingled complacence and confusion—for which she could not account.

"Has anything happened, Aunt Caroline?" she asked.

"Not that I am aware of. Major Ashton has been here."

"Then I am glad I was absent," said Grace, hastily.

"He would not have troubled you," said Mrs. Sheldon. "He is not very likely to renew his suit."

"I am glad to hear that," said Grace, somewhat surprised, nevertheless.

"Indeed he is engaged to be married to—another."

"That's news, indeed. Who is it, Aunt Caroline?" asked Grace, with genuine curiosity.

"I hardly know how to tell you," said the widow, in a tone which gave Grace an inkling of the truth, amazing as it was.

"Perhaps he is going to marry you," she said.

"You have guessed it, Grace," said the widow, in graceful confusion.

There was a dead silence.

"Don't you congratulate me?" she asked, somewhat irritably.

"My dear aunt, I hope you will be happy; but it seems so—strange," Grace replied.

"I don't know why it should be so strange."

"At any rate, Aunt Caroline, I hope it may be for your happiness;" and Grace, kissing her aunt hurriedly, left the room.

"Grace is jealous," thought Mrs. Sheldon, smiling a little to herself. "She begins to value him now that she has lost him."

It is hardly necessary to say that she was entirely mistaken. It was evident to Grace why the major had sought her aunt in marriage, and she felt that his motives were wholly mercenary.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PAUL SELLS THE MINE.

After a fatiguing trip Paul and his eccentric acquaintance reached Custer City. It was a rough journey, but Paul enjoyed it, and he was equally entertained and instructed by the comments of his traveling companion, who on his part formed a special liking for Paul.

"Did you say you owned a hotel in Custer City, Mr. Scott?" asked Paul, when they were near the end of the journey.

"Jim Scott owns such a hotel," answered Mr. Scott, significantly.

"Beg pardon, I mean Jim. If the price isn't high, I will stop there."

"The price is high and the accommodations very or'nary," said Scott, frankly, "but the price to you won't be anything. You'll be there as my company."

"Oh, but Jim, you won't make any money if you act so generously; but I thank you all the same."

"I don't want to make any money out of you, youngster."

"I haven't done anything to deserve such kindness, Jim."

"Then we'll say you haven't. Look here, youngster, old Jim's been prospered, and he's got no one to spend his money on. It won't hurt him to give you free board, and he's goin' to do it."

Paul grasped the rough hand of his new friend, and frankly accepted the offer, which acceptance Jim appeared to regard as a personal favor.

He was installed in a tolerably comfortable room in the Black Hills Hotel—as comfortable, at any rate, as the hotel, which was a rough-looking structure, afforded, and soon made himself at home.

Of course, curiosity soon induced him to roam about the town. It was composed of extemporaneous structures, for the town was as yet in its infancy, and built somewhat on the plan of Cheyenne, and other towns which he had seen along the Union Pacific road. The town lots had been staked out sixty by one hundred and fifty feet in size, and the principal street, which had been named after General Crook, was two hundred feet wide. Other streets were a hundred and fifty feet wide. The "city" was certainly of mushroom growth, not less than four hundred buildings having been erected in a single month.

To Paul everything seemed new, strange, and delightful. It was a state of society to which he had not

been accustomed, and excited his curiosity and interest. He found that fashionable attire was not at all required in Custer City. Men went about dressed like day laborers of the humblest sort, who at home had been accustomed to the comforts and refinements of life. Everything was free and unconventional, and so everybody felt thoroughly independent.

Some of the leading citizens lived in Jim Scott's hotel, which was pretty well filled.

Occupying a room just opposite Paul's was a small, elderly man, with stiff, gray hair, a wizened face, and crafty eyes.

"Who is my opposite neighbor, Jim?" asked Paul, with some curiosity.

"Oh, that's old Fox—Simeon Fox."

Paul pricked up his ears. He remembered that Mr. Bradford's partner in the Blackstone mine bore the name of Fox. If this was the man, he didn't doubt from his looks that he was capable of outwitting and swindling his employer. He didn't think it politic, however, just at present to show any particular interest in the man.

"What is his business?" inquired Paul, in an indifferent tone.

"He is part owner of one of our best mines."

"What is the name of the mine?"

"The Blackstone mine."

"You say he is part owner; who is the partner?"

"Some rich man in Chicago. Ten to one old Simeon will fleece him."

"I suppose such a mine as that is worth considerable money."

"Oh, yes."

"About how much?"

"Why, youngster, you don't want to buy into it, do you?"

"Not in the present state of my finances," answered Paul, laughing.

"Oh, well, I'd give thirty thousand dollars myself for the Blackstone mine."

Thirty thousand dollars! That would make fifteen thousand dollars for a half interest, and Simeon Fox had tried to induce Mr. Bradford to sell his half for two thousand dollars! This was an obvious swindle.

"Would Mr. Fox sell out for that sum, do you think?" asked Paul.

"It's likely he wouldn't. He's making too much money out of it. But, youngster, you seem particularly interested in the mine."

"I am," answered Paul, quietly.

He had rapidly decided that it would be for his interest to reveal to Jim Scott his real business at Custer City.

"Well, that's strange! What can it be to you?"

"Jim, can you keep a secret?"

"Can I? I reckon!"

"Then I will tell you one. I am sent out here by Mr. Bradford, of Chicago, Simeon Fox's partner."

Scott whistled, and looked at Paul in evident amazement.

"He must have great confidence in you, youngster, to send out a boy of your age."

"I think he has," answered Paul, with pardonable pride. "Now, I want to know if you will help me?"

In answer Mr. Scott put his hard and horny hand into the boy's, and said:

"You can depend on Jim Scott every time."

"Then I'll tell you how the case stands. This Fox is continually sending on discouraging accounts about the mine to Mr. Bradford, and he lately offered him two thousand dollars for his half."

"The mean cuss! I beg your pardon, that ain't the word I meant to use, but maybe it's the best."

"He thought Mr. Bradford would get discouraged, and sell out without taking any trouble to verify his statement."

"I see."

"But he suspected there was a conspiracy to cheat him, and he sent me out with full power to act for him."

"That's a good 'un! And old Fox doesn't know of your bein' here."

"He has no idea that Mr. Bradford has sent a messenger."

"I shall be glad to see the old rascal taken in."

"Mr. Bradford gave five thousand dollars for his half of the mine."

"And it was a good bargain at that price. But he never ought to have taken Simeon Fox as a partner."

"What would you advise me to do, Jim?"

"You might take old Fox at his word, and buy his half for two thousand dollars."

"Then the swindle would be on our side."

"No, because he proposed the trade."

"Mr. Bradford is a rich man, and though he wants justice in the matter, he does not care to take any advantage."

"Then, Paul, I'll tell you what you'd better do."

"What, Jim?"

"Have you full authority to act for Mr. Bradford?"

"Yes, as I can show you."

"I'll take your word for it. Sell to me."

"Are you willing to buy?"

"Yes, if you'll give me a good bargain?"

"What would you consider a good bargain, Jim?"

"I'll pay you twelve thousand dollars for the share you have to sell, money down, or my draft on Chicago."

"Will it be worth that to you!"

"It will be worth more or I wouldn't buy, but it isn't worth that to your principal, for he can't be here to look after old Fox with his tricks."

"He may try some of them on you, Jim."

"I'll risk it. He'll find I get up in the morning as early as he does. To be plain with you, Paul, I'll make him an offer, give or take, and either way I shall make money. If the whole mine is in my hands I can make it pay."

"Very well, Jim. I am ready to accept your offer."

"I didn't much think," said Scott, laughing, when I came across you in Cheyenne, that I should buy a mine of you."

"You didn't think I carried one about with me?" said Paul, laughing.

"I sha'n't let Simeon know about our bargain just yet. I want you to have a talk with him, and see what the old rascal has to say."

Paul approached the old man, and said, politely: "I believe I am speaking to Mr. Fox."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

In accordance with Jim Scott's wish, and also because he desired to have a better idea of Simeon Fox, Paul took a walk one morning out to the Blackstone mine.

All seemed activity, and, under the personal direction of Mr. Fox, the work was proceeding well.

After a few minutes spent in looking about him, Paul approached the old man, and said, politely:

"I believe I am speaking to Mr. Fox?"

"Yes, that's my name," said the other, fixing his small, round eyes searchingly on our young hero.

"You are manager of the Blackstone mine?"

"Yes; but I have no work to give out," answered the old man, brusquely—"got all I want."

Paul smiled.

"I think you make a mistake," he replied. "I am not looking for work."

"Then if you have no business with me, I can't stand here wasting my time."

"I have business with you, Mr. Fox. In fact, I have come to Custer City on purpose to see you."

"I can't waste my time with boys," said Simeon Fox, rudely.

"I come from Chicago," said Paul, composedly.

The old man looked at him sharply.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Paul Palmer."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"Then you'd better wait till you grow a little older before you take up the time of a business man."

"I come from Mr. Bradford," continued Paul.

"Eh?" ejaculated Simeon Fox, astonished.

"Mr. Bradford, who owns one-half of the Blackstone mine, has sent me out here to look after his interests."

"Then Mr. Bradford must be a fool to employ a whipper-snapper like you."

"That remains to be seen. At any rate, I have come out here with full powers to act for him in any way I see fit."

"Do you expect me to believe all that, youngster?" demanded Fox, surveying our hero disdainfully.

"Please read that," said Paul, drawing out a paper which conferred upon him the power he claimed.

"Well," answered Simeon Fox, "it strikes me there must be a great scarcity of business men in

Chicago, when my partner is obliged to send out a half-grown boy like you."

"That doesn't alter the fact that I represent Mr. Bradford, does it?"

"No," answered the old man, slowly.

He was thinking to himself:

"It will be easy to hoodwink this boy. He is inexperienced, and will swallow all I say."

"Well," he said, aloud, with a change of manner, "that's my partner's affair, not mine. Now, young man, what have you to say to me?"

"How is the mine doing, Mr. Fox?"

Simeon Fox screwed up his face into a doleful expression, and shook his head.

"Badly," he answered.

"Doesn't it come up to your expectations?"

"No. You can tell Mr. Bradford that we were badly taken in when we bought it."

"You paid ten thousand dollars, Mr. Bradford tells me."

"Yes; and half the money is thrown away."

"You don't consider it worth what was paid, then?"

Simeon Fox shook his head.

"We shall never get our money back."

"Will you give five thousand dollars for Mr. Bradford's share in the mine?"

"Young man, do you take me for a fool?" demanded Fox, with seeming indignation.

"Quite the contrary, Mr. Fox," answered Paul, smiling.

"Then why do you ask me such ridiculous questions?"

"I was merely trying to get your idea of the value of the mine."

"Well, now you know it."

"You think it is not worth ten thousand dollars?"

"No!" answered Mr. Fox, with emphasis.

"Then," continued Paul, "you will have no hesitation in accepting the offer I am about to make you."

"An offer?—you make me?" said the old man, suspiciously.

"Yes, sir. I offer you, in Mr. Bradford's name, five thousand dollars for your half of the mine."

"You offer me—five thousand dollars!" ejaculated Fox, staring at Paul in surprise and consternation.

"Exactly so."

"When I tell you it is too much?"

"Yes, I am offering you a good bargain."

"Do you mean to throw away Mr. Bradford's money?" gasped Fox.

"No; but if Mr. Bradford finds fault with me, I will stand the blame."

"I don't understand this," said Mr. Fox, nervously. "You are joking with me."

"I may joke sometimes, Mr. Fox, but I would not be so disrespectful as to joke with you in a matter of this kind."

"Why do you offer me five thousand dollars when I say the property—the whole property—is not worth that?" demanded Fox, irritably.

"I don't understand you, Mr. Fox. You admit that I offer you a good price, and yet you make objection to accepting it."

"What would Mr. Bradford do with the mine if he bought it? He isn't coming out here," said Fox, eying Paul searchingly.

"I should select a man to superintend it."

"You!" repeated Fox, contemptuously. "What do you know about mines?"

"I should try to learn something," answered Paul, good-naturedly.

"I never in all my life heard of such a ridiculous thing as intrusting such important business to a beardless boy. Why, you haven't even a mustache."

"I hope to have one in due time," said Paul, laughing.

"Well, I can't waste any more time with you," said Fox, crustily, and he turned away.

"Stay a moment, Mr. Fox," said Paul. "I have made you a serious ofter. Do you accept it or not?"

"No!" shouted Fox, angrily.

"Then all I can say is, you have refused a good offer."

"A good offer!" shouted Fox. "Why, the mine is worth——"

Then he stopped short in confusion, for he was about to commit himself badly.

Paul finished out his sentence for him.

"The mine is worth a good deal more than I have offered. That is quite true, Mr. Fox."

"I didn't say anything of the kind," snarled Fox.

"No, but you were going to. And now, Mr. Fox, as I see I can't do any business with you, I may as well tell you that I have sold out Mr. Bradford's share of the mine for a satisfactory price, and shall not have any further occasion to take up your time with business."

"You have sold Mr. Bradford's share?" ejaculated Fox, in dismay.

"Yes."

"To whom?"

"To Jim Scott."

"Jim Scott! I won't agree to it," returned Fox, in intense disgust, for he knew that he could not cheat his new partner.

"Your permission was not needed," said Paul. "Either of you had a perfect right to dispose of his share of the property to any one he pleased."

"Why didn't you offer it to me?" asked Fox, looking deeply disappointed."

"To be plain with you, Mr. Fox, because it has been your policy to depreciate the property. You wouldn't have paid five thousand dollars, while Scott has paid me more than twice as much."

"I must see him," muttered Simeon Fox; and he went back to the hotel, looking as if he had just been invited to his own funeral.

Two days afterward Jim Scott drew Paul aside.

"Paul," he said, "I have just sold my share of the mine to Simeon Fox."

"I hope you didn't lose anything by the trade."

"I guess not," chuckled Jim. "I made the old sinner pay sixteen thousand dollars."

"You don't say so!"

"He fought hard, but he had to pay it. And now do you know what I am going to do?"

"No."

"I have made four thousand dollars by the trade. I am going to give you half of it."

"Oh, Mr. Scott—Jim, I mean!"

"Yes, Paul. You helped me make the money, and half of it is fairly yours."

Two thousand dollars! Paul was not sure whether he was awake or dreaming, but there flashed upon him all the advantage he would derive from so large a sum of money, and that he could emancipate his mother at once from the slavery of the needle, and he clasped Jim's hand in fervent gratitude.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A SCENE AT OMAHA.

Paul had good reason to exult in the success of his mission. He had certainly done well for his employer, for he had sold out his mining property at a profit of seven thousand dollars, while as for himself he had two thousand dollars to show as the recompense of his shrewdness.

Our hero did not immediately leave Custer City, but looked about him, as instructed by Mr. Bradford. The result was that he purchased a new mine, paying three thousand dollars, one thousand being on his own account, the other two-thirds on behalf of his employer. This he left in charge of his new friend, Jim Scott, and, when matters had been fully arranged, started on his way home.

At Omaha Paul decided to stop over for twenty-four hours, having a little business to attend to for Mr. Bradford.

He applied at a hotel for accommodations.

"I am sorry," said the landlord, "that I can't give you a room by yourself. I am crowded."

Paul hesitated, for he didn't like sharing the room of a total stranger.

"Are the other hotels in the city likely to be full?" he asked.

"More than likely. Still, you can try."

However, Paul didn't care to take the time for searching, when there was such a slight chance of success.

"Where can you put me?" he asked.

"In No. 37. There is one gentleman there, who seems quiet; I don't think he will disturb you."

"Are there two beds?"

"Yes."

"Then I suppose I may as well make it do."

Paul was accordingly shown up to No. 37. He found that it was what is called a double room. That is, there were two beds in it.

"Where is the other gentleman?" he asked.

"He won't be in till late in the evening," was the reply.

"Do you happen to remember his name?" Paul inquired.

"John Davenport."

"Where does he hail from?"

"Kansas City."

"Probably he is all right," thought our hero,

"though I don't quite like the idea of rooming with a complete stranger. Well, I will take the room."

It was about the middle of the afternoon. Paul deposited his carpet-bag in the room, but what articles of value he had he left for safe keeping in the office of the hotel, as prudent travelers generally do, at any rate when they find themselves paired off with strangers.

Deferring his business to the next day, Paul took a walk about the streets and made himself familiar with the outward appearance of a city which has become one of the most important on the transcontinental route. He admired the new high-school building, built on the site of the old capitol, with its spire rising nearly two hundred feet above the street, the elegant private dwellings on the hill, and perhaps more than all, the huge railroad bridge that spans the Missouri River. Everywhere he marked signs of prosperity and enterprise, and he felt that it must be inspiring to live where growth is so rapid.

He used his time well, and went back to the hotel to supper.

About nine o'clock, feeling fatigued with his journey, he decided to go up stairs to bed, so as to feel quite refreshed the next day.

The room was empty, his roommate, Mr. Davenport, of Kansas City, not having arrived.

Paul undressed and got into bed. How long he had

slept he did not know, but he woke all at once, and from his bed looked on a sight which instantly awakened him thoroughly.

A man was exploring his carpet-bag, which for convenience he had deposited on the table, in search, no doubt, of valuables.

"What are you doing there?" demanded Paul, sitting up in bed.

The man turned suddenly, and revealed to Paul the well known features of Luke Denton.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A THIEF FOILED.

Until that moment Denton had not taken the trouble to notice the face of his roommate. He had only observed that he was a boy.

The recognition was mutual, and it is hard to tell who was the more surprised.

"The train boy, as I'm a sinner!" ejaculated Denton, in amazement.

"Luke Denton!" ejaculated Paul in turn.

"How came you here?" asked the man.

"What are you doing with my carpet-bag?" demanded Paul.

"Oh, bother!" returned Denton, defiantly. "That's my business!"

"I should say that it was my business," retorted Paul.

"Where do you keep your money? I don't find any in the bag."

"I don't keep any there."

"Give me your pocket-book quick, youngster. I am hard up, and I must have money."

As he spoke he advanced toward the bed.

"You can't have mine, Mr. Denton," said Paul. "When did you get out of jail?"

"Boy, do you want me to kill you?" demanded Denton, fiercely.

"No, and I sha'n't permit you to rob me either."

"Listen to me!" said Denton, rapidly. "I am a desperate man, as I have already told you. I have escaped from prison, but I have used up what money I had. I must have more. I don't forget that you were the means of sending me to prison, but if you will give me all the money you have about you, I will let you go this time."

"Suppose I refuse?" said Paul.

"Then I will strangle you first, and rob you afterward," answered Luke Denton, wickedly.

As he spoke he moved nearer the bed, but he paused suddenly when Paul drew a revolver from beneath his pillow, and pointed it at him.

"Stop there, Mr. Luke Denton," he said, firmly. "I should be very unwilling to shoot you, but I mean to defend myself. One step nearer and I fire!"

"You wouldn't dare do it," said Denton, chafing with disappointment.

"You'd better not take the risk."

"I was only joking," said Denton. "I thought I would see if I could scare you. I'm going to bed."

"Not in this room."

"What do you mean?"

"You don't go to bed in this room," repeated Paul.

"This room is mine. I have a better claim to it than you, for I engaged it first."

"I do not feel safe in passing the night in your company."

"That is nothing to me."

"Listen, Luke Denton. Unless you leave this room at once I will ring the bell, summon the landlord, and denounce you as an escaped convict."

Luke Denton was so angry that, had he been armed, he might have fired at our hero, but his stock of money had been too limited to allow him to purchase a pistol.

"Nonsense!" he said. "I will do you no harm."

"Are you going?" asked Paul, still keeping him covered with his weapon.

There was no help for it. With a muttered execration Luke Denton left the room, and Paul, glad to be rid of him, locked the door, and breathed a sigh of relief.

It may be well to add here that Denton was not recaptured, but months afterward was shot in California by a miner whom he had robbed. It was a sad ending to a life which might have been honorably spent, for he was a man of excellent abilities and capacity, but

preferred the hazardous career of a thief to the more prosaic paths of industry and honesty.

Next day Paul purchased a ticket for Chicago.

As he stood at the depot waiting for his train his attention was drawn to the pale and sorrowful face of a woman who had just inquired the price of a ticket to Chicago, and, as if it were beyond her means, turned away with a deep sigh.

"Are you in trouble, madam?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered. "It is important for me to go to Chicago, but I have not money enough within five dollars."

"I will advance the money," said Paul, stirred with pity.

"God bless you, young man!" exclaimed the lady, fervently. "You don't know how important it is for me to make this journey."

CHAPTER XL.

THE LADY'S SECRET.

With great politeness Paul selected a seat for the lady, took charge of her traveling-bag, and then, without betraying the least curiosity, took a seat in front of her.

"You are taking a great deal of trouble for me," she said, gratefully.

"No trouble at all," said Paul, cheerfully.

"That shows you have a kind heart. Have you a mother?"

"Yes, madam;" and Paul's face brightened as he thought how soon he should see her. He had not got weaned from his home and his mother, though he had reached the age at which many boys consider themselves entitled to do it.

"God grant she may long be spared to you!" said the lady.

"Perhaps you have a son?" said Paul, kindly.

"No; but if I had, I could wish he were such as you."

"Thank you."

"Dutiful and affectionate to his mother, as I am sure you are, and kind and obliging even to strangers, as you have been to me."

"I am afraid you have been unfortunate, madam," said Paul, respectfully.

"Yes, I have met with sorrow. I will make you my confidant, since your kindness entitles you to my confidence."

"Do not think it necessary to speak of your troubles if it will give you pain," said our hero.

"It will bring me relief to speak to some one who will sympathize with me."

Paul could not interpose further objection. Moreover, he was not without curiosity, and was desirous of learning in what way his new friend had suffered.

"Eight years since," she commenced, "in the city of San Francisco, I met a gentleman who seemed struck with my appearance. At all events, he paid me marked attention, and it was not long before he asked my hand in marriage. I must premise that my father was considered rich, and I myself had a fortune of fifty thousand dollars at my own disposal. It had been bequeathed me by a sister of my mother. I forgot too late that it was the knowledge of this fact that had attracted my suitor, and that he was quite indifferent to me. However, I suspected nothing at the time. My lover, for he persuaded me that he was such, was

not lacking in devotion. Moreover, he had agreeable manners, and was well calculated by his smooth plausibility to deceive any one, certainly an inexperienced girl like myself.

"Well, to cut matters short, his suit was accepted. Not only did I favor him, but my father and mother were both well pleased with the match. We made a brief journey as far as Los Angeles, and on our return purchased a pleasant house on California street.

"Though my money was at my own disposal, I could not long resist the entreaties of my husband to give him the management of it. He professed to know how to invest it so as to double it in a year's time. On the strength of expected gains he lived in more expensive style than I thought prudent, and wasted more than I can guess at the gaming-table. At any rate, in less than two years the property was gone, and my father was obliged to come to our help.

"Now that I had nothing left, my husband began to treat me with cruel neglect. I feared even that he would raise his hand against me, and such was my misery that I hardly knew whether I was relieved or otherwise when one morning I found my husband missing, and a letter of farewell on my bureau, stating that I should never again see him."

"Have you never seen him since?" asked Paul, with interest.

"Never; but I have known for some time that he was in Chicago."

"And you wish to rejoin him?"

"No, but to foil him in his wicked plans. I learned, four days since, that he was about to marry an estimable lady in Chicago, wholly forgetful of the wife he had deserted. I felt that there was no time to lose. As I knew my father would not consent to my journeying alone on such an errand, I departed from San Francisco secretly, and, as it proved, with insufficient money. You came to my assistance, and I shall take care that you do not lose by it."

"I have no anxiety on that point," said Paul.

"But I do not wish you to suffer for your kindness. You can do me still another favor."

"What is that?"

"When we reach Chicago I do not wish to go to a hotel. If your mother will allow me to stay with her temporarily, I shall feel much indebted to her and to you."

"My mother lives in a very plain—indeed, in an humble style."

"As if I cared for that. I know she is good, since she has a good son."

Paul saw no objection, and, on reaching Chicago, took the lady at once to his mother's lodgings.

CHAPTER XLI.

MAJOR ASHTON'S ENGAGEMENT.

The announcement that her aunt had agreed to marry Major Ashton was intensely disagreeable to Grace Dearborn. She knew, if her aunt did not, that he was simply a mercenary adventurer, who, failing to secure her hand and fortune, was now scheming for her aunt's larger fortune, and willing to take her hand with it, in spite of the disparity in their years.

"My dear aunt," she said, "I hope you will consider well the step you propose to take."

"Why should I need to consider?" asked Mrs. Sheldon, somewhat displeased. "I have known the major for a considerable time, and I know the estimation in which he is held in Chicago."

"I do not think he is an honorable, reliable man."

"Oh, I understand very well why you are prejudiced against him, Grace," said her aunt, sharply.

"And why, Aunt Caroline?"

"Because he was a suitor of yours, and you are mortified to think he should accept your rejection as final, and so soon pay his attentions in another quarter."

"My dear aunt," said Grace, earnestly, "you were never more mistaken. I feel no interest in him or his marriage, save as it affects you."

Mrs. Sheldon was inwardly sensible that she was acting foolishly, and this made her only the more indisposed to listen to her niece's remonstrances.

"What objections can you possibly think of, Grace? Perhaps you do not think well of second marriages."

"It is not that, Aunt Caroline. I think second marriages are often wise."

"And why not in this case?" demanded Mrs. Sheldon, coldly.

"You are aware, Aunt Caroline, that you are considerably older than Major Ashton."

"Not so very much older. Major Ashton tells me he is thirty-eight."

"He does not look that. But even then you——"

"Are a *little* older," admitted the widow, wondering whether Grace knew her real age. At any rate, she knew it would be of no use to call herself forty, as her niece had something like a correct idea of how much she exceeded that age. "However," she added, quickly steering away from a topic which was not acceptable, "that is Major Ashton's affair. I myself made that objection, and mentioned my age, but he said, like a true gentleman as he is, that it was unim-

portant in comparison with the similarity of our tastes."

"I had not supposed that you and Major Ashton were so similar in your tastes," said Grace, puzzled.

"Because you have never understood or appreciated the major, Grace," returned her aunt.

"Then you are quite decided upon this marriage, Aunt Caroline?" said Grace, wistfully.

"Quite so, Grace."

"Then I can only hope, Aunt Caroline, that it will meet your wishes and expectations."

"I am willing to run the risk, Grace," said her aunt, complacently.

As Grace left the room Mrs. Sheldon said to herself:

"I expected Grace would feel disturbed. She may say what she likes, but it is clear to me that she is jealous and mortified that the major has so soon recovered from her rejection of him."

CHAPTER XLII.

A REVELATION.

Grace felt that her aunt's strange resolution to marry was likely to affect her seriously. Hitherto she had formed one of her aunt's household, and bearing a part of the expenses, had lived under her aunt's protection. She felt that should her aunt marry Major Ashton this arrangement must be broken up. She was not willing to live under the same roof with Major Ashton, with that gentleman holding toward her the embarrassing relation of uncle. Nothing could be further from the truth than her aunt's hypothesis that Grace was suffering from jealousy and mortified pride. So far from it, she felt an active dislike for the major, and regarded him with contempt as an unscrupulous fortune-hunter.

When the question of her own future came up before her, she was perplexed, and with reason. Save Mrs. Sheldon, she had no near relatives, and she did not feel inclined to set up an independent establishment for herself, and live alone—that is, until she should marry. At present there was no prospect of

marriage. Of suitors who had offered themselves there was no lack, but on none of them did she for a moment seriously think. So far as they were concerned she was heart-whole. Had she never met one to whom she could fancy herself happily united? If so, she had not admitted it even to herself.

On the day after the conversation with her aunt, she was sitting idly at her desk, her mind occupied by the embarrassments of her position, when the servant entered the room.

"Miss Grace," she said, "there is a lady in the parlor who wishes to see you."

"A lady? Who is it? Did she give you her card?"

"No, Miss Grace."

"Did you ever see her before?"

"She has never been here before. I think, Miss Grace," added the girl, hesitating, "that it is some one in trouble."

"What makes you think so, Jane?"

"Because she looks so sad."

"Does she seem like a poor woman?"

"She was dressed very respectably," answered Jane, who appeared to be in doubt how to answer the question.

"Tell her I will be down directly," said Grace, who could not find it in her heart to refuse a person in trouble, though she suspected there would be an ap-

peal for money. As she was known to be an heiress, such applications were of very common occurrence.

Five minutes later Grace entered the drawing-room.

Seated on the sofa was a woman, dressed in sober tints, and apparently rather past middle life.

She rose as Grace entered, but in the imperfect light the young lady did not recognize her.

"Miss Dearborn, you do not remember me?" she said.

"I cannot at this moment recall you," was the answer.

"I am Mrs. Vernon."

"The artist's mother," said Grace, quickly.

"The same."

"I hope all is well with you—and him! You look sad."

"I have reason to be, Miss Dearborn. My poor son is very sick. I do not know if he will live."

Grace could not account for the effect of these words, or for the thrill of emotion which agitated her, for she had not read the secret of her own heart.

"How long has this been?" she asked, hurriedly.

"For a week only. Frederic seems to be suffering from a slow fever, and the physician tells me that the chief difficulty in the way of recovery is the mental depression which weighs him down."

"Has he not been prospering? Is he in pecuniary trouble?"

"No; he has been unusually prosperous, and has on hand more orders than he could attend to if he were in health."

"Have you any knowledge of any other cause for his depression?"

"Yes, Miss Dearborn; I know it only too well. It is for this I came here to see you."

"Name it. If there is anything I can do——"

"Don't promise too hastily. You may be offended if I tell you my poor boy's secret."

"No, no," answered Grace; but her agitation showed that she began to suspect.

"Plainly then, my dear young lady, he is madly, hopelessly in love with you."

Grace half-rose from her seat, while her expressive face showed a variety of contending emotions.

"Do not be angry," implored Mrs. Vernon. "The poor boy cannot help it. He never would have dared speak to you, nor would he have allowed me to come to you had he known my intention."

"May you not be mistaken?" asked Grace, in a low voice.

"No; he has spoken to me more than once about his love, and in his delirium your name has been constantly upon his lips."

Grace was deeply moved.

"I did not dream of this," she said; "it distresses me."

"I knew you would sympathize with us," said the poor mother.

"I should like to do more. Tell me—what can I do for you both?"

"I was about to tell you. Are you willing to call on my poor boy, to let him see you once more? A few kind words would do him much good, and perhaps turn the scales in his favor."

"I will go—I will go at once, if you wish me."

"How kind you are! No wonder my poor boy loves you. Oh, Miss Dearborn, I wish you were poor like ourselves, so that Frederic might have some hope of gaining your hand. I know of course it is useless. He is a poor artist—you a rich heiress, and a favorite in society."

Grace did not reply, but speedily made herself ready and accompanied Mrs. Vernon to her lodgings.

They were modest, but no longer humble. As the young artist prospered he took care to remove his mother from the poor home which they had been forced to occupy, and were at present in neat apartments, in a respectable part of the city.

"I will go in and prepare him," said the mother.

"I am sorry to see you so ill, Mr. Vernon," said Grace.

Grace remained waiting in the outer room till, summoned by Mrs. Vernon, she entered the sick-chamber.

The artist was reclining on the bed, his face thinned, and his eyes unnaturally bright with fever. Over his wasted face there came a look of glad rapture as he saw the one he loved enter the room.

"Grace—Miss Dearborn!" he cried. "This is, indeed, kind. Mother, you did not tell me who had come to see me."

"No; I wished to surprise you, my boy."

"It is a glad surprise," he murmured.

"I am so sorry to see you so ill, Mr. Vernon," said Grace, approaching, with a look of pity on her face. "Why did I not know before that you were ill?"

"I did not know that you would care—much," he said, slowly.

"I do care much; I look upon you as a valued friend."

His eyes fell as he heard these words. Yes, she looked upon him as a friend; but with that he felt he never could be content.

"Thank you," he said; "you were always kind."

After a pause, he said:

"Miss Dearborn, I am afraid you would no longer be kind if you knew all."

"I am sure there is nothing that would change my good opinion of you."

"Ah! but there may be. If you knew how presumptuous I have been! I have a great mind to tell you, if you will first promise me your forgiveness."

"I promise it!" said Grace, in a low voice.

"Then, Miss Dearborn, Grace, forgetting the difference between us, forgetting that you were a rich and brilliant heiress, and I a poor and struggling artist, I confess that I have dared to love you!"

She did not start nor exhibit surprise, for she had been forewarned. Instead she smiled.

"Surely it is not hard to forgive such an offense as that," she said.

"Then you are not angry?" he asked, eagerly.

"No; why should I be when an honorable man—a man of talent—pays me the highest compliment in his power."

"Thank you. You make me very happy," sighed Vernon, with relief. "Ah! if things were different, if you were poor I might hope that you would look upon me with favor."

"Is my fortune such an impediment then, Frederic?" asked Grace, smiling.

"Surely," he exclaimed, his face glowing with sudden hope, "you do not mean——"

"I mean that there is nothing in your proposal to offend me. I mean that, if you will give me time, I

will question my own heart, and if it responds, my fortune shall not separate us."

"God bless you!" exclaimed Vernon, and his face wore a look of happiness to which it had long been a stranger.

Do any of my readers doubt how it will end?

CHAPTER XLIII.

MAJOR ASHTON AT BAY.

"Well, mother, have you any news to tell me?" asked Paul, when he had received a joyful welcome from his mother and sister.

"There is one item," said Mrs. Palmer. "Of course you have not forgotten Miss Dearborn?"

"As if I would be likely to! I don't forget one who has been so kind to all of us. What about her?"

"She is to be married—a very romantic marriage too—to a young portrait painter, who is rich in talent, but has no money."

"Well, I hope he is worthy of her. Miss Dearborn has money enough for both."

"Her aunt, too—Mrs. Sheldon—is to be married."

"What, she?" laughed Paul. "Why, she must be almost sixty."

"Don't let her hear that you have said that, or she will never forgive you."

"But she is that, isn't she?"

"She is perhaps fifty or over."

"And who is the happy man?" asked Paul, smiling.

"Major Ashton."

As she pronounced his name there was a sudden exclamation from the lady whom Paul had brought home with him.

"Major Ashton!" she exclaimed, her face indicating distress.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Palmer, in response. "Do you know him?"

"Do I know him?" repeated the lady, pressing her hand to her side. "*He is my husband!*"

"Your husband!" exclaimed Paul, in surprise and perplexity. "Then how can he marry another?"

"It is a wicked deception!" said the strange lady. "This marriage must be stopped. I cannot permit him to deceive a worthy lady, as Mrs. Sheldon doubtless is. Is she wealthy?"

"She is very wealthy," said Mrs. Palmer. "I have heard her fortune estimated at a quarter of a million."

"That explains it," said his unfortunate wife. "He only thinks of money. He married me for money, and he would make her a second victim."

"She must be at least fifteen years older than the major," said Mrs. Palmer.

"He would care little for that, since it is not love but money that influences him. Where does Mrs.

Sheldon live? I must see her at once, and warn her."

"I know where she lives," said Paul. "I will accompany you, if you wish."

"Will you, indeed, be so kind?"

"Certainly. I shall be glad to do anything for a family that has been so kind to my mother and myself."

Half an hour later Paul stood on the steps of Mrs. Sheldon's handsome house, with the lady at his side.

"Is Mrs. Sheldon at home?" he asked of the servant, who answered his call.

"I believe so. What name shall I say?"

"Paul Palmer. Will you say that my business is urgent?"

"You can come in," said the servant.

So the two entered the parlor, and in a few minutes Mrs. Sheldon, in some surprise at the message, entered also.

Paul rose and bowed.

"You are my niece's *protege*, I believe," said Mrs. Sheldon, "or rather the boy in whom she is interested."

"Yes, madam, Miss Dearborn has been very kind to me."

"You have a message for me?" asked the widow, looking inquiringly at the lady with Paul.

"This lady wishes to speak to you," said Paul.

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. Sheldon, coldly.

"Madam," cried the stranger, in unmistakable emotion, "is this true what I hear? Are you engaged to marry Major Ashton?"

"By what right do you inquire?" demanded Mrs. Sheldon, haughtily.

"By what right? Oh, madam, by the best of all rights. *I am his wife!*"

Mrs. Sheldon stared at the stranger in dismay and incredulity.

"I cannot believe this," she said, sharply. "You must be beside yourself."

"No, madam; it is only too true. Look! I have my marriage certificate. You must believe that."

Rapidly she told her story, and, though much against her will, Mrs. Sheldon was forced to believe the truth of the story. It was terribly mortifying to find that she had come so near being duped, and her heart was stirred with indignation against the smooth-tongued deceiver, who had so craftily schemed against her happiness.

Scarcely was the story told when a ring was heard at the door, and the servant entering announced "Major Ashton."

"Bring him in!" said Mrs. Sheldon, sternly. "Now I shall know the truth."

Major Ashton, dressed in the most careful manner, with a rose in his button-hole, his heart full of happy anticipations of the fortune that would soon be his, was ushered in.

He did not at first notice the other occupants of the room, but hurried to Mrs. Sheldon, with a very good affectation of a lover's fervor. He was about to press a kiss on the widow's cheek, when she stepped back and said:

"Major Ashton, I wish to introduce you to this lady."

Mrs. Ashton, the ill-used wife, rose at the words, and threw aside her vail.

"Oh, Reginald!" she cried, reproachfully.

One look was enough, and he stood as if paralyzed

"Confusion!" he muttered. "What evil fate brought you here?"

"I came to prevent your doing a wicked thing, Reginald. I came to prevent your deceiving this good lady as you deceived, or worse than deceived me."

By this time Major Ashton had partially recovered his self-possession. He meant to fight it out if possible.

"How did you escape from the asylum?" he asked.

"From the asylum!" repeated his wife. "What do you mean?"

"Mrs. Sheldon," said the major, turning to his affianced bride, "I am sorry you have been disturbed by a madwoman. This lady is my sister. For years she has been confined in a mad-house. She is under the singular delusion that she is my wife, and she may have told you so."

Mrs. Sheldon looked relieved, but it was only for a moment. She remembered the certificate.

"I have seen your marriage certificate," she said.

"A forged paper," he replied, shrugging his shoulders.

"Mrs. Sheldon," said the wife, "I beg of you not to believe him. He has no sister, and I have heard him say he never had any. Of my marriage I can call living witnesses, but it will take time. If, however, you will telegraph to my father in San Francisco, you will have speedy proof of the falsehood of his assertions."

"I believe you," said the widow. "I do not think you would deceive me."

"Then you choose to be humbugged by a madwoman?" said Major Ashton. "Have you no more confidence in me?"

"I will reserve my opinion. Are you willing that I should telegraph to San Francisco?"

Major Ashton hesitated a moment. He saw that his last chance was gone.

His wife's story was sure to be confirmed.

"Well," he said, recklessly, "the game is up! It is unfortunately true that I am tied to this lady. I hoped before this she would do me the favor to die and leave me free."

"Go, sir!" said Mrs. Sheldon, indignantly. "I am fortunate in being saved from marriage with such a man."

"I sha'n't break my heart," said the major, mockingly. "I am sorry to lose your fortune, but for yourself, I am well rid of the engagement. If you had not been blind, you would have understood that nothing but your money would have induced me to marry a woman old enough to be my mother."

This was the unkindest cut of all. Poor Mrs. Sheldon sank back in an arm-chair in a fit of hysterics, and the major, with a cynical smile, left the room.

The widow was a kind-hearted woman, and, when she came to herself, generously insisted upon Mrs. Ashton remaining under her roof till she had recovered from the fatigue of her journey. Later she purchased her a return ticket to San Francisco, and secured an escort for her. She expressed a hope

that her recreant husband would return to his duty, but Mrs. Ashton shook her head.

"I could never trust him," she said. "I am better off with my father," and Mrs. Sheldon felt that she was right.

Major Ashton disappeared from Chicago, but where he went has not transpired. Perhaps amid other scenes he may be laying snares for other heiresses. Mrs. Sheldon, at any rate, has been saved from his arts.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CONCLUSION.

Mr. Emanuel Manson was considerably surprised to see Paul walk into the office the morning after his arrival. He was not aware that our hero was still in Mr. Bradford's employ. Though it had been at first suggested that Mrs. Palmer should come weekly to receive a part of Paul's salary, Mr. Bradford afterward decided to give his young agent a hundred dollars in advance, which was placed in his mother's hands, and obviated the necessity of her calling. Seeing and hearing nothing of Paul, therefore, Mr. Manson naturally concluded that he had been discharged, and was seeking for employment elsewhere.

"Good-morning, Mr. Manson!" said Paul, politely.

"What, you here again?" exclaimed Manson, by no means pleased.

"Yes, I am here again."

"It was hardly worth your while to come," said the book-keeper, with a sneer. "We have no vacancy."

Paul smiled, for he saw what was meant.

"Is Julius here still?" he asked.

"Yes, he is, and likely to stay. You needn't flatter yourself you can step into his place."

"I haven't the slightest wish to do so," said Paul, good-naturedly.

"Because you are so prosperous, I suppose," sneered Manson.

"You've hit it, Mr. Manson. I am too prosperous to wish to interfere with Julius."

"What are you doing?" asked the book-keeper, not without some curiosity.

"I have been traveling for a house in this city."

"Indeed! It was a fortunate house."

"I agree with you, Mr. Manson. I have done very well for them."

"You travel! I'd as soon send a baby."

"I dare say *you* would. Is Mr. Bradford in?"

"Yes, but he is busy."

"Nevertheless, I will venture to disturb him."

"You'd better not; he won't like it."

But Paul had already opened the door of the inner office, and stood in the presence of Mr. Bradford.

"Bless my soul, Paul! I am glad to see you," said the manufacturer, rising and shaking hands cordially with our hero. "When did you arrive?"

"Yesterday afternoon, and I tried to get a chance to call, but——"

"Of course, your mother wanted to see you. It's all right. Now let me know all about your trip."

Paul gave a summary of results, and his employer listened with evident surprise and approval.

"You have done splendidly," he said. "I did not dream of realizing so much for the mine. And you got the better of Fox, too. I value that as much as I do the money you have made for me. Besides your wages, I shall make you a present of five hundred dollars, to show my appreciation of your services."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Bradford, but I have been handsomely rewarded by another party," and he mentioned the two thousand dollars paid him by Jim Scott.

"I am all the more pleased," said Mr. Bradford.

"I was not sure whether I ought to accept it," said Paul.

"You were right in doing so, since it was neither given nor promised till after you had sold the mine. That, however, will make no difference with my gift."

As he spoke, he wrote a check for $500 and handed it to Paul, who expressed his gratitude warmly.

"I have also," Paul continued, "made an investment for you and myself."

"What is that?"

"I had an opportunity to purchase a promising

mine for three thousand dollars. I secured two-thirds for you, and one-third for myself."

"So it seems we are partners, Paul," said Mr. Bradford, smiling.

"Yes, sir, as far as that goes."

"Very well. I ratify your action."

At this moment a telegraph boy appeared with a dispatch, which he handed to Mr. Brandford.

"What's this?" said the manufacturer. "Who is Jim Scott?"

"The man I left in charge of our mine."

"Read that, then."

Paul took the telegram and read:

"Your mine is developing richly. Will you sell for fifteen thousand dollars?"

Paul's eyes sparkled with delight, not alone at his prospective profit, but at this proof of his financial shrewdness.

"Well, Paul, what shall we do?" asked the manufacturer, smiling. "It is your affair, and you shall decide."

"We might sell half on that basis," suggested Paul.

"Very good, Write the dispatch, and it shall be sent at once. Moreover, I will consider you half-owner, and you shall give me back that check for five hundred dollars. Then we shall have each invested one thousand five hundred dollars."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Bradford, I can hardly believe this is real."

It was indeed hard to realize that besides the thousand dollars which remained to him after the investment, he would receive three thousand seven hundred and fifty for the sale of half his share, and retain the other half, which was probably worth quite as much more. It was probably no exaggeration to say that he was worth eight thousand dollars, while three months since he was glad when he managed to earn eight or ten dollars a week as a train boy.

"By the way, Paul," said the manufacturer, "I hope you won't retire from business, now you are rich."

"I should not like to be idle, sir."

"I will engage you to travel for my firm, then, and your compensation will depend on your success. Will that suit you?"

"Yes, sir; I can ask for nothing better. When shall I report for service?"

"You may come here daily to get acquainted with the details of our trade. I shall not send you out again for a few weeks."

As Paul passed out of the office, the book-keeper said:

"Well, won't Mr. Bradford take you on again?"

"I have never been out of Mr. Bradford's employment," answered Paul, smiling.

"What!" ejaculated Manson. "You don't mean to say you have been traveling for our firm?"

"That is just what I do say. When I gave up my position to Julius, I was promoted to traveling salesman."

"Well, well, I never heard the like. Mr. Bradford must be crazy."

Paul smiled, and went out. It was not long before the book-keeper found how Paul stood, and his manner changed accordingly—not from friendship, but from policy.

As I write, Paul is nearing his twenty-first birthday. On the day he attains his majority he is to be admitted into the firm as junior partner. He is worth fully twenty thousand dollars, and with his business capacity bids fair eventually to become very rich. He has bought a comfortable house for his mother, who, I need hardly say, does not need now to take in sewing. Near them live Grace and her artist husband. They have recently returned from Italy, where Frederic Vernon studied art enthusiastically, and with success. He no longer paints portraits, but devotes his attention to general art.

Mrs. Sheldon is still a widow, and content to remain so. She is thankful now for the narrow escape she

had from Major Ashton, who would have dissipated her fortune and made her wretched. Though she did not approve Grace's choice of a husband, she became reconciled long ago, and is an almost daily visitor at Mrs. Vernon's happy home.

Stephen Palmer's temporary prosperity was owing to a connection with counterfeiters. He fled the country to avoid arrest, going first to Canada. Once he wrote in great distress to Paul, and our hero sent him a hundred dollars. For the sake of the relationship, Paul would gladly set him up in some business; but Stephen is a ne'er-do-well, and will probably never amount to anything.

Mr. Manson, the book-keeper, is still at his post, but Julius was long ago succeeded by another boy, He proved too idle and careless even for his uncle to tolerate. He envies Paul's success, but will never emulate the diligence and fidelity which made it possible.

THE END.

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A story which will give young readers an unsurpassed insight into the customs of the Egyptian people. Amuba, a prince of the Rebu nation, is carried with his charioteer Jethro into slavery. They become inmates of the house of Ameres, the Egyptian high-priest, and are happy in his service until the priest's son accidentally kills the sacred cat of Bubastes. In an outburst of popular fury Ameres is killed, and it rests with Jethro and Amuba to secure the escape of the high-priest's son and daughter.

"The story, from the critical moment of the killing of the sacred cat to the perilous exodus into Asia with which it closes, is very skillfully constructed and full of exciting adventures. It is admirably illustrated."—*Saturday Review.*

With Washington at Monmouth: A Story of Three Philadelphia Boys. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Three Philadelphia boys, Seth Graydon "whose mother conducted a boarding-house which was patronized by the British officers;" Enoch Ball, "son of that Mrs. Ball whose dancing school was situated on Letitia Street," and little Jacob, son of "Chris, the Baker," serve as the principal characters. The story is laid during the winter when Lord Howe held possession of the city, and the lads aid the cause by assisting the American spies who make regular and frequent visits from Valley Forge. One reads here of home-life in the captive city when bread was scarce among the people of the lower classes, and a reckless prodigality shown by the British officers, who passed the winter in feasting and merry-making while the members of the patriot army but a few miles away were suffering from both cold and hunger. The story abounds with pictures of Colonial life skillfully drawn, and the glimpses of Washington's soldiers which are given show that the work has not been hastily done, or without considerable study.

For the Temple: A Tale of the Fall of Jerusalem. By G. A. HENTY. With full-page Illustrations by S. J. SOLOMON. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Mr. Henty here weaves into the record of Josephus an admirable and attractive story. The troubles in the district of Tiberias, the march of the legions, the sieges of Jotapata, of Gamala, and of Jerusalem, form the impressive and carefully studied historic setting to the figure of the lad who passes from the vineyard to the service of Josephus, becomes the leader of a guerrilla band of patriots, fights bravely for the Temple, and after a brief term of slavery at Alexandria, returns to his Galilean home with the favor of Titus.

"Mr. Henty's graphic prose pictures of the hopeless Jewish resistance to Roman sway add another leaf to his record of the famous wars of the world." —*Graphic.*

Facing Death: or, The Hero of the Vaughan Pit. A Tale of the Coal Mines. By G. A. HENTY. With full-page Illustrations by GORDON BROWNE. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

"Facing Death" is a story with a purpose. It is intended to show that a lad who makes up his mind firmly and resolutely that he will rise in life, and who is prepared to face toil and ridicule and hardship to carry out his determination, is sure to succeed. The hero of the story is a typical British boy, dogged, earnest, generous, and though "shamefaced" to a degree, is ready to face death in the discharge of duty.

"The tale is well written and well illustrated, and there is much reality in the characters. If any father, clergyman, or schoolmaster is on the lookout for a good book to give as a present to a boy who is worth his salt, this is the book we would recommend."—*Standard.*

Tom Temple's Career. By HORATIO ALGER. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Tom Temple, a bright, self-reliant lad, by the death of his father becomes a boarder at the home of Nathan Middleton, a penurious insurance agent. Though well paid for keeping the boy, Nathan and his wife endeavor to bring Master Tom in line with their parsimonious habits. The lad ingeniously evades their efforts and revolutionizes the household. As Tom is heir to $40,000, he is regarded as a person of some importance until by an unfortunate combination of circumstances his fortune shrinks to a few hundreds. He leaves Plympton village to seek work in New York, whence he undertakes an important mission to California, around which center the most exciting incidents of his young career. Some of his adventures in the far west are so startling that the reader will scarcely close the book until the last page shall have been reached. The tale is written in Mr. Alger's most fascinating style, and is bound to please the very large class of boys who regard this popular author as a prime favorite.

Maori and Settler: A Story of the New Zealand War. By G. A. HENTY. With full-page Illustrations by ALFRED PEARSE 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

The Renshaws emigrate to New Zealand during the period of the war with the natives. Wilfrid, a strong, self-reliant, courageous lad, is the mainstay of the household. He has for his friend Mr. Atherton, a botanist and naturalist of herculean strength and unfailing nerve and humor. In the adventures among the Maoris, there are many breathless moments in which the odds seem hopelessly against the party, but they succeed in establishing themselves happily in one of the pleasant New Zealand valleys.

"Brimful of adventure, of humorous and interesting conversation, and vivid pictures of colonial life."—*Schoolmaster.*

Julian Mortimer: A Brave Boy's Struggle for Home and Fortune. By HARRY CASTLEMON. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Here is a story that will warm every boy's heart. There is mystery enough to keep any lad's imagination wound up to the highest pitch. The scene of the story lies west of the Mississippi River, in the days when emigrants made their perilous way across the great plains to the land of gold. One of the startling features of the book is the attack upon the wagon train by a large party of Indians. Our hero is a lad of uncommon nerve and pluck, a brave young American in every sense of the word. He enlists and holds the reader's sympathy from the outset. Surrounded by an unknown and constant peril, and assisted by the unswerving fidelity of a stalwart trapper, a real rough diamond, our hero achieves the most happy results. Harry Castlemon has written many entertaining stories for boys, and it would seem almost superfluous to say anything in his praise, for the youth of America regard him as a favorite author.

"Carrots:" Just a Little Boy. By MRS. MOLESWORTH. With Illustrations by WALTER CRANE. 12mo, cloth, price 75 cents.

"One of the cleverest and most pleasing stories it has been our good fortune to meet with for some time. Carrots and his sister are delightful little beings, whom to read about is at once to become very fond of." *Examiner.*

"A genuine children's book; we've seen 'em seize it, and read it greedily. Children are first-rate critics, and thoroughly appreciate Walter Crane's illustrations."—*Punch.*

Mopsa the Fairy. By JEAN INGELOW. With Eight page Illustrations. 12mo, cloth, price 75 cents.

"Mrs. Ingelow is, to our mind, the most charming of all living writers for children, and 'Mopsa' alone ought to give her a kind of pre-emptive right to the love and gratitude of our young folks. It requires genius to conceive a purely imaginary work which must of necessity deal with the supernatural, without running into a mere rio' of fantastic absurdity; but genius Miss Ingelow has and the story of 'Jack' is as careless and joyous, but as delicate as a picture of childhood."—*Eclectic.*

A Jaunt Through Java: The Story of a Journey to the Sacred Mountain. By EDWARD S. ELLIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

The central interest of this story is found in the thrilling adventures of two cousins, Hermon and Eustace Hadley, on their trip across the island of Java, from Samarang to the Sacred Mountain. In a land where the Royal Bengal tiger runs at large; where the rhinoceros and other fierce beasts are to be met with at unexpected moments; it is but natural that the heroes of this book should have a lively experience. Hermon not only distinguishes himself by killing a full-grown tiger at short range, but meets with the most startling adventure of the journey. There is much in this narrative to instruct as well as entertain the reader, and so deftly has Mr. Ellis used his material that there is not a dull page in the book. The two heroes are brave, manly young fellows, bubbling over with boyish independence. They cope with the many difficulties that arise during the trip in a fearless way that is bound to win the admiration of every lad who is so fortunate as to read their adventures.

Wrecked on Spider Island; or, How Ned Rogers Found the Treasure. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

A "down-east" plucky lad who ships as cabin boy, not from love of adventure, but because it is the only course remaining by which he can gain a livelihood. While in his bunk, seasick, Ned Rogers hears the captain and mate discussing their plans for the willful wreck of the brig in order to gain the insurance. Once it is known he is in possession of the secret the captain maroons him on Spider Island, explaining to the crew that the boy is afflicted with leprosy. While thus involuntarily playing the part of a Crusoe, Ned discovers a wreck submerged in the sand, and overhauling the timbers for the purpose of gathering material with which to build a hut finds a considerable amount of treasure. Raising the wreck; a voyage to Havana under sail; shipping there a crew and running for Savannah; the attempt of the crew to seize the little craft after learning of the treasure on board, and, as a matter of course, the successful ending of the journey, all serve to make as entertaining a story of sea-life as the most captious boy could desire.

Geoff and Jim: A Story of School Life. By ISMAY THORN. Illustrated by A. G. WALKER. 12mo, cloth, price 75 cents.

"This is a prettily told story of the life spent by two motherless bairns at a small preparatory school. Both Geoff and Jim are very lovable characters, only Jim is the more so; and the scrapes he gets into and the trials he endures will, no doubt, interest a large circle of young readers."—*Church Times.*

"This is a capital children's story, the characters well portrayed, and the book tastefully bound and well illustrated."—*Schoolmaster.*

"The story can be heartily recommended as a present for boys."—*Standard.*

The Castaways; or, On the Florida Reefs. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

This tale smacks of the salt sea. It is just the kind of story that the majority of boys yearn for. From the moment that the Sea Queen dispenses with the services of the tug in lower New York bay till the breeze leaves her becalmed off the coast of Florida, one can almost hear the whistle of the wind through her rigging, the creak of her straining cordage as she heels to the leeward, and feel her rise to the snow-capped waves which her sharp bow cuts into twin streaks of foam. Off Marquesas Keys she floats in a dead calm. Ben Clark, the hero of the story, and Jake, the cook, spy a turtle asleep upon the glassy surface of the water. They determine to capture him, and take a boat for that purpose, and just as they succeed in catching him a thick fog cuts them off from the vessel, and then their troubles begin. They take refuge on board a drifting hulk, a storm arises and they are cast ashore upon a low sandy key. Their adventures from this point cannot fail to charm the reader. As a writer for young people Mr. Otis is a prime favorite. His style is captivating, and never for a moment does he allow the interest to flag. In "The Castaways" he is at his best.

Tom Thatcher's Fortune. By HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Like all of Mr. Alger's heroes, Tom Thatcher is a brave, ambitious, unselfish boy. He supports his mother and sister on meager wages earned as a shoe-pegger in John Simpson's factory. The story begins with Tom's discharge from the factory, because Mr. Simpson felt annoyed with the lad for interrogating him too closely about his missing father. A few days afterward Tom learns that which induces him to start overland for California with the view of probing the family mystery. He meets with many adventures. Ultimately he returns to his native village, bringing consternation to the soul of John Simpson, who only escapes the consequences of his villainy by making full restitution to the man whose friendship he had betrayed. The story is told in that entertaining way which has made Mr. Alger's name a household word in so many homes.

Birdie: A Tale of Child Life. By H. L. CHILDE-PEMBERTON. Illustrated by H. W. RAINEY. 12mo, cloth, price 75 cents.

"The story is quaint and simple, but there is a freshness about it that makes one hear again the ringing laugh and the cheery shout of children at play which charmed his earlier years."—*New York Express.*

Popular Fairy Tales. By the BROTHERS GRIMM. Profusely Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

"From first to last, almost without exception, these stories are delightful."—*Athenæum.*

With Lafayette at Yorktown: A Story of How Two Boys Joined the Continental Army. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

The two boys are from Portsmouth, N. H., and are introduced in August, 1781, when on the point of leaving home to enlist in Col. Scammell's regiment, then stationed near New York City. Their method of traveling is on horseback, and the author has given an interesting account of what was expected from boys in the Colonial days. The lads, after no slight amount of adventure, are sent as messengers—not soldiers—into the south to find the troops under Lafayette. Once with that youthful general they are given employment as spies, and enter the British camp, bringing away valuable information. The pictures of camp-life are carefully drawn, and the portrayal of Lafayette's character is thoroughly well done. The story is wholesome in tone, as are all of Mr. Otis' works. There is no lack of exciting incident which the youthful reader craves, but it is healthful excitement brimming with facts which every boy should be familiar with, and while the reader is following the adventures of Ben Jaffreys and Ned Allen he is acquiring a fund of historical lore which will remain in his memory long after that which he has memorized from text-books has been forgotten.

Lost in the Canon: Sam Willett's Adventures on the Great Colorado. By ALFRED R. CALHOUN. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

This story hinges on a fortune left to Sam Willett, the hero, and the fact that it will pass to a disreputable relative if the lad dies before he shall have reached his majority. The Vigilance Committee of Hurley's Gulch arrest Sam's father and an associate for the crime of murder. Their lives depend on the production of the receipt given for money paid. This is in Sam's possession at the camp on the other side of the cañon. A messenger is dispatched to get it. He reaches the lad in the midst of a fearful storm which floods the cañon. His father's peril urges Sam to action. A raft is built on which the boy and his friends essay to cross the torrent. They fail to do so, and a desperate trip down the stream ensues. How the party finally escape from the horrors of their situation and Sam reaches Hurley's Gulch in the very nick of time, is described in a graphic style that stamps Mr. Calhoun as a master of his art.

Jack: A Topsy Turvy Story. By C. M. CRAWLEY-BOEVEY. With upward of Thirty Illustrations by H. J. A. MILES. 12mo, cloth, price 75 cents.

"The illustrations deserve particular mention, as they add largely to the interest of this amusing volume for children. Jack falls asleep with his mind full of the subject of the fishpond, and is very much surprised presently to find himself an inhabitant of Waterworld, where he goes though wonderful and edifying adventures. A handsome and pleasant book."—*Literary World.*

Search for the Silver City: A Tale of Adventure in Yucatan. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Two American lads, Teddy Wright and Neal Emery, embark on the steam yacht Day Dream for a short summer cruise to the tropics. Homeward bound the yacht is destroyed by fire. All hands take to the boats, but during the night the boat is cast upon the coast of Yucatan. They come across a young American named Cummings, who entertains them with the story of the wonderful Silver City, of the Chan Santa Cruz Indians. Cummings proposes with the aid of a faithful Indian ally to brave the perils of the swamp and carry off a number of the golden images from the temples. Pursued with relentless vigor for days their situation is desperate. At last their escape is effected in an astonishing manner. Mr. Otis has built his story on an historical foundation. It is so full of exciting incidents that the reader is quite carried away with the novelty and realism of the narrative.

Frank Fowler, the Cash Boy. By HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Thrown upon his own resources Frank Fowler, a poor boy, bravely determines to make a living for himself and his foster-sister Grace. Going to New York he obtains a situation as cash boy in a dry goods store. He renders a service to a wealthy old gentleman named Wharton, who takes a fancy to the lad. Frank, after losing his place as cash boy, is enticed by an enemy to a lonesome part of New Jersey and held a prisoner. This move recoils upon the plotter, for it leads to a clue that enables the lad to establish his real identity. Mr. Alger's stories are not only unusually interesting, but they convey a useful lesson of pluck and manly independence.

Budd Boyd's Triumph; or, the Boy Firm of Fox Island. By WILLIAM P. CHIPMAN. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

The scene of this story is laid on the upper part of Narragansett Bay, and the leading incidents have a strong salt water flavor. Owing to the conviction of his father for forgery and theft, Budd Boyd is compelled to leave his home and strike out for himself. Chance brings Budd in contact with Judd Floyd. The two boys, being ambitious and clear sighted, form a partnership to catch and sell fish. The scheme is successfully launched, but the unexpected appearance on the scene of Thomas Bagsley, the man whom Budd believes guilty of the crimes attributed to his father, leads to several disagreeable complications that nearly caused the lad's ruin. His pluck and good sense, however, carry him through his troubles. In following the career of the boy firm of Boyd & Floyd, the youthful reader will find a useful lesson—that industry and perseverance are bound to lead to ultimate success.

The Errand Boy; or, How Phil Brent Won Success. By HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

The career of "The Errand Boy" embraces the city adventures of a smart country lad who at an early age was abandoned by his father. Philip was brought up by a kind-hearted innkeeper named Brent. The death of Mrs. Brent paved the way for the hero's subsequent troubles. Accident introduces him to the notice of a retired merchant in New York, who not only secures him the situation of errand boy but thereafter stands as his friend. An unexpected turn of fortune's wheel, however, brings Philip and his father together. In "The Errand Boy" Philip Brent is possessed of the same sterling qualities so conspicuous in all of the previous creations of this delightful writer for our youth.

The Slate Picker: The Story of a Boy's Life in the Coal Mines By HARRY PRENTICE. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

This is a story of a boy's life in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. There are many thrilling situations, notably that of Ben Burton's leap into the "lion's mouth"—the yawning shute in the breakers—to escape a beating at the hands of the savage Spilkins, the overseer. Gracie Gordon is a little angel in rags, Terence O'Dowd is a manly, sympathetic lad, and Enoch Evans, the miner-poet, is a big-hearted, honest fellow, a true friend to all whose burdens seem too heavy for them to bear. Ben Burton, the hero, had a hard road to travel, but by grit and energy he advanced step by step until he found himself called upon to fill the position of chief engineer of the Kohinoor Coal Company.

A Runaway Brig; or, An Accidental Cruise. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

"A Runaway Brig" is a sea tale, pure and simple, and that's where it strikes a boy's fancy. The reader can look out upon the wide shimmering sea as it flashes back the sunlight, and imagine himself afloat with Harry Vandyne, Walter Morse, Jim Libby and that old shell-back, Bob Brace, on the brig Bonita, which lands on one of the Bahama keys. Finally three strangers steal the craft, leaving the rightful owners to shift for themselves aboard a broken-down tug. The boys discover a mysterious document which enables them to find a buried treasure, then a storm comes on and the tug is stranded. At last a yacht comes in sight and the party with the treasure is taken off the lonely key. The most exacting youth is sure to be fascinated with this entertaining story.

Fairy Tales and Stories. By HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. Profusely Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

"If I were asked to select a child's library I should name these three volumes 'English,' 'Celtic,' and 'Indian Fairy Tales,' with Grimm and Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales."—*Independent.*

The Island Treasure; or, Harry Darrel's Fortune. By FRANK H. CONVERSE. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Harry Darrel, an orphan, having received a nautical training on a school-ship, is bent on going to sea with a boyish acquaintance named Dan Plunket. A runaway horse changes his prospects. Harry saves Dr. Gregg from drowning and the doctor presents his preserver with a bit of property known as Gregg's Island, and makes the lad sailing-master of his sloop yacht. A piratical hoard is supposed to be hidden somewhere on the island. After much search and many thwarted plans, at last Dan discovers the treasure and is the means of finding Harry's father. Mr. Converse's stories possess a charm of their own which is appreciated by lads who delight in good healthy tales that smack of salt water.

The Boy Explorers: The Adventures of Two Boys in Alaska. By HARRY PRENTICE. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Two boys, Raymond and Spencer Manning, travel from San Francisco to Alaska to join their father in search of their uncle, who, it is believed, was captured and detained by the inhabitants of a place called the "Heart of Alaska." On their arrival at Sitka the boys with an Indian guide set off across the mountains. The trip is fraught with perils that test the lads' courage to the utmost. Reaching the Yukon River they build a raft and float down the stream, entering the Mysterious River, from which they barely escape with their lives, only to be captured by natives of the Heart of Alaska. All through their exciting adventures the lads demonstrate what can be accomplished by pluck and resolution, and their experience makes one of the most interesting tales ever written.

The Treasure Finders: A Boy's Adventures in Nicaragua. By JAMES OTIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Roy and Dean Coloney, with their guide Tongla, leave their father's indigo plantation to visit the wonderful ruins of an ancient city. The boys eagerly explore the dismantled temples of an extinct race and discover three golden images cunningly hidden away. They escape with the greatest difficulty; by taking advantage of a festive gathering they seize a canoe and fly down the river. Eventually they reach safety with their golden prizes. Mr. Otis is the prince of story tellers, for he handles his material with consummate skill. We doubt if he has ever written a more entertaining story than "The Treasure Finders."

Household Fairy Tales. By the BROTHERS GRIMM. Profusely Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

"As a collection of fairy tales to delight children of all ages this work ranks second to none."—*Daily Graphic.*

Dan the Newsboy. By HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

The reader is introduced to Dan Mordaunt and his mother living in a poor tenement, and the lad is pluckily trying to make ends meet by selling papers in the streets of New York. A little heiress of six years is confided to the care of the Mordaunts. At the same time the lad obtains a position in a wholesale house. He soon demonstrates how valuable he is to the firm by detecting the bookkeeper in a bold attempt to rob his employers. The child is kidnaped and Dan tracks the child to the house where she is hidden, and rescues her. The wealthy aunt of the little heiress is so delighted with Dan's courage and many good qualities that she adopts him as her heir, and the conclusion of the book leaves the hero on the high road to every earthly desire.

Tony the Hero: A Brave Boy's Adventure with a Tramp. By HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Tony, a sturdy bright-eyed boy of fourteen, is under the control of Rudolph Rugg, a thorough rascal, shiftless and lazy, spending his time tramping about the country. After much abuse Tony runs away and gets a job as stable boy in a country hotel. Tony is heir to a large estate in England, and certain persons find it necessary to produce proof of the lad's death. Rudolph for a consideration hunts up Tony and throws him down a deep well. Of course Tony escapes from the fate provided for him, and by a brave act makes a rich friend, with whom he goes to England, where he secures his rights and is prosperous. The fact that Mr. Alger is the author of this entertaining book will at once recommend it to all juvenile readers.

A Young Hero; or, Fighting to Win. BY EDWARD S. ELLIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

This story tells how a valuable solid silver service was stolen from the Misses Perkinpine, two very old and simple minded ladies. Fred Sheldon, the hero of this story and a friend of the old ladies, undertakes to discover the thieves and have them arrested. After much time spent in detective work, he succeeds in discovering the silver plate and winning the reward for its restoration. During the narrative a circus comes to town and a thrilling account of the escape of the lion from its cage, with its recapture, is told in Mr. Ellis' most fascinating style. Every boy will be glad to read this delightful book.

The Days of Bruce: A Story from Scottish History. By GRACE AGUILAR. Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

"There is a delightful freshness, sincerity and vivacity about all of Grace Aguilar's stories which cannot fail to win the interest and admiration of every lover of good reading."—*Boston Beacon.*

Tom the Bootblack; or, The Road to Success. By HORATIO ALGER, JR. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

A bright, enterprising lad was Tom the bootblack. He was not at all ashamed of his humble calling, though always on the lookout to better himself. His guardian, old Jacob Morton, died, leaving him a small sum of money and a written confession that Tom, instead of being of humble origin, was the son and heir of a deceased Western merchant, and had been defrauded out of his just rights by an unscrupulous uncle. The lad started for Cincinnati to look up his heritage. But three years passed away before he obtained his first clue. Mr. Grey, the uncle, did not hesitate to employ a ruffian to kill the lad. The plan failed, and Gilbert Grey, once Tom the bootblack, came into a comfortable fortune. This is one of Mr. Alger's best stories.

Captured by Zulus: A story of Trapping in Africa. By HARRY PRENTICE. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

This story details the adventures of two lads, Dick Elsworth and Bob Harvey, in the wilds of South Africa, for the purpose of obtaining a supply of zoological curiosities. By stratagem the Zulus capture Dick and Bob and take them to their principal kraal or village. The lads escape death by digging their way out of the prison hut by night. They are pursued, and after a rough experience the boys eventually rejoin the expedition and take part in several wild animal hunts. The Zulus finally give up pursuit and the expedition arrives at the coast without further trouble. Mr. Prentice has a delightful method of blending fact with fiction. He tells exactly how wild-beast collectors secure specimens on their native stamping grounds, and these descriptions make very entertaining reading.

Tom the Ready; or, Up from the Lowest. By RANDOLPH HILL. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

This is a dramatic narrative of the unaided rise of a fearless, ambitious boy from the lowest round of fortune's ladder—the gate of the poorhouse—to wealth and the governorship of his native State. Thomas Seacomb begins life with a purpose. While yet a schoolboy he conceives and presents to the world the germ of the Overland Express Co. At the very outset of his career jealousy and craft seek to blast his promising future. Later he sets out to obtain a charter for a railroad line in connection with the express business. Now he realizes what it is to match himself against capital. Yet he wins and the railroad is built. Only an uncommon nature like Tom's could successfully oppose such a combine. How he manages to win the battle is told by Mr. Hill in a masterful way that thrills the reader and holds his attention and sympathy to the end.

Roy Gilbert's Search: A Tale of the Great Lakes. By WM. P. CHIPMAN. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

A deep mystery hangs over the parentage of Roy Gilbert. He arranges with two schoolmates to make a tour of the Great Lakes on a steam launch. The three boys leave Erie on the launch and visit many points of interest on the lakes. Soon afterward the lad is conspicuous in the rescue of an elderly gentleman and a lady from a sinking yacht. Later on the cruise of the launch is brought to a disastrous termination and the boys narrowly escape with their lives. The hero is a manly, self-reliant boy, whose adventures will be followed with interest.

The Young Scout; The Story of a West Point Lieutenant. By EDWARD S. ELLIS. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

The crafty Apache chief Geronimo but a few years ago was the most terrible scourge of the southwest border. The author has woven, in a tale of thrilling interest, all the incidents of Geronimo's last raid. The hero is Lieutenant James Decker, a recent graduate of West Point. Ambitious to distinguish himself so as to win well-deserved promotion, the young man takes many a desperate chance against the enemy and on more than one occasion narrowly escapes with his life. The story naturally abounds in thrilling situations, and being historically correct, it is reasonable to believe it will find great favor with the boys. In our opinion Mr. Ellis is the best writer of Indian stories now before the public.

Adrift in the Wilds: The Adventures of Two Shipwrecked Boys. BY EDWARD S. ELLIS. 12mo, cloth, price, $1.00.

Elwood Brandon and Howard Lawrence, cousins and schoolmates, accompanied by a lively Irishman called O'Rooney, are en route for San Francisco. Off the coast of California the steamer takes fire. The two boys and their companion reach the shore with several of the passengers. While O'Rooney and the lads are absent inspecting the neighborhood O'Rooney has an exciting experience and young Brandon becomes separated from his party. He is captured by hostile Indians, but is rescued by an Indian whom the lads had assisted. This is a very entertaining narrative of Southern California in the days immediately preceding the construction of the Pacific railroads. Mr. Ellis seems to be particularly happy in this line of fiction, and the present story is fully as entertaining as anything he has ever written.

The Red Fairy Book. Edited by ANDREW LANG. Profusely Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

"A gift-book that will charm any child, and all older folk who have been fortunate enough to retain their taste for the old nursery stories."—*Literary World.*

The Boy Cruisers; or, Paddling in Florida. By St. George Rathborne. 12mo, cloth, price, $1.00.

Boys who like an admixture of sport and adventure will find this book just to their taste. We promise them that they will not go to sleep over the rattling experiences of Andrew George and Roland Carter, who start on a canoe trip along the Gulf coast, from Key West to Tampa, Florida. Their first adventure is with a pair of rascals who steal their boats. Next they run into a gale in the Gulf and have a lively experience while it lasts. After that they have a lively time with alligators and divers varieties of the finny tribe. Andrew gets into trouble with a band of Seminole Indians and gets away without having his scalp raised. After this there is no lack of fun till they reach their destination. That Mr. Rathborne knows just how to interest the boys is apparent at a glance, and lads who are in search of a rare treat will do well to read this entertaining story.

Guy Harris: The Runaway. By Harry Castlemon. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

Guy Harris lived in a small city on the shore of one of the Great Lakes. His head became filled with quixotic notions of going West to hunt grizzlies, in fact, Indians. He is persuaded to go to sea, and gets a glimpse of the rough side of life in a sailor's boarding house. He ships on a vessel and for five months leads a hard life. He deserts his ship at San Francisco and starts out to become a backwoodsman, but rough experiences soon cure him of all desire to be a hunter. At St. Louis he becomes a clerk and for a time he yields to the temptations of a great city. The book will not only interest boys generally on account of its graphic style, but will put many facts before their eyes in a new light. This is one of Castlemon's most attractive stories.

The Train Boy. By Horatio Alger, Jr. 12mo, cloth, price $1.00.

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